"This Holy Sacrament of Service in Fiji"

Christianity and the Abolition of Indo-Fijian Indenture

James Smith, B.A.

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Wm. Roger Louis

William Roger Louis, D. Phil., D. Litt.

Department of History

Supervising Professor

Sumit Guha

Sumit Guha, Ph.D.

Department of History

Second Reader

Abstract

This thesis explores the influence of Christianity on the end of Indian indenture in early 20th century British Fiji. Fiji became a colony in 1874 and, due to the influence of initial colonial governor Arthur Gordon Hamilton, the Fijians were protected from recruitment to the growing sugar industry on the island. To make up for the shortage of labor, Indians were brought on 5-year indentured labor contracts. The Indians had to work in oppressive conditions which became more exploitative as the years went on. Many of them stayed in Fiji due to the fact that a passage back to India would cost them another 5 years of indenture, a total of 10 years. The system continued relatively unexamined until the 1910s, when the Indian populace and legislature became interested in their citizens overseas. Several scholars have examined the effect of the Indian government on the end of indenture, but few have looked at the effect of Christianity. Many significant critics regarding the injustices of the system were either clergymen or missionaries. These men and women were typically on the margins of the church. Even in Fiji, the critics were those who felt marginalized or underappreciated in their position. They spoke out against indenture in spite of the Fijian Wesley Methodist Church's complacency. It took men and women of faith, not tied to the government or church establishment, to unearth the abuses of the Fijian indenture system. This thesis discusses the history of indenture in Fiji and its abolition, specifically looking at impacts of the reports of J. W. Burton, C. F. Andrews and Florence Garnham. It also analyzes the complacency of the Fijian church due to the lack of evangelistic success and monetary ties.

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Contents

Preface

> Overseers commit outrages against us whenever they like. Many of our brothers there make a noose and hang themselves, from fear of hard work, and from fears of jail, and the blows of overseers. Not many days several Madrasis (South Indians) at a plantation in Nauvua hanged themselves for this reason. The cause of their death can be known from the death records there. Although a coolie inspector is appointed by the Immigration Department to investigate our living conditions in each district, these white inspectors never make clear our true situation. These great men are drinking brandy at the homes of the planters all the time. When can they try to stop the suffering of us poor Indians?[1]

So says one story from the only first-hand account of an Indian indentured laborer on the island of Fiji. The pacific island of Fiji became a British colony in 1874 and quickly caught the eye of Australian sugar manufacturers. As labor was badly needed, the Fijian government and planters looked to the super abundant population of India, already within the English empire, for contracted labor.[2] The indentured system of labor was already in place in several British colonies, with Indians scattered around the globe. The indenture system would gradually fade away in many of the colonies as they outgrew their need for it.[3] Some colonies, like South Africa, would have dramatic abolition movements, but nowhere in the British empire would the 'evils' of the system be revealed so dramatically as in Fiji. From 1910, the exploitative nature of indentured contracts and the immoral actions committed on the sugar plantations would be dramatically revealed through a series of reports and exposés. Eventually, the protest in

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[1] Totaram Sanadhya, *My Twenty-One Years in the Fiji Islands,* John Kelly and Uttra Kumari Singh, trans. (Fiji Museum: Suva, Fiji, 1991), 47.

[2] BriJ L. Lal, *Broken Waves : A History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 13.

[3] Hugh Tinker, A New System of Slavery, (London: Oxford University Press, 1974). This book is an excellent resource for the entirety of Indian indenture.

India would come to encompass citizens from all walks of life.[4] These protests and the impact of the Indian government *have* been examined by historians, but little credit has been given to the fact that some of the most important reports and exposés condemning the indenture system in Fiji were written by clergymen and missionaries. Christian campaigners like J. W. Burton, C. F. Andrews and Florence Garnham traveled to Fiji to expose the immoralities of indenture, despite the complacency of the mainline Methodist church in Fiji. It was these Christian outsiders that were truly able to fulfill, in the words of Burton, "this holy sacrament of service in … Fiji."[5]

Chronology of Thesis

Though time periods besides this will be mentioned, the majority of this thesis will take place from the publication of J. W. Burton's *The Fiji of To-day* in 1910 to the official end of indenture in 1920. This time period does contain the First World War which did effect some of the British colonial decisions—especially the discontinuation of Indian immigration in 1916—but this thesis will not focus on the effect of the War.

Terms and Clarifications

In this thesis, the terms 'Indo-Fijians,' 'Indian in Fiji' and 'Fiji Indians' will be used interchangeably to denote Indians that immigrated to Fiji. In order to denote Indians that were still under indenture, as opposed to 'free Indians,' the terms

[4] Karen Ray, "The Abolition of Indentured Emigration and the Politics of Indian Nationalism, 1894-1917," PhD diss., McGill University, July 1980, Abstract.
[5] John Wear Burton, *The Fiji of To-day,* (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1910), 364.

'indentured laborers' or 'Indian indentured laborers' will be used. The term 'coolie' was used extensively at the time, but now contains an imperialistic or sometimes racist connotation.

There are four government agencies that dealt with the system of indentured labor in Fiji; (1) the Fiji government, which was based in the capital city of Suva, (2) the Colonial office in London, (3) the Indian government based on the sub-continent and (4) the India office, which shared the same building as the colonial office. The Fiji government included the Governor of Fiji, typically a low-level bureaucrat from Britain, and various other bureaucrats.[6] Among these bureaucratic system was a department that dealt with indentured laborers headed by Agent-General of Immigrants and his cohort of inspectors.[7] The Fiji government, tied up as it was with the wishes of the sugar planters, was staunchly pro-indenture until it was forced to give up.[8] The colonial office was closely tied to the government of Fiji and possessed the same opinion. The India office in Whitehall answered to the British parliament and did not concern itself much with indenture. Over the Indian Office was the Secretary of State of India. It was the Indian government that made the largest effort towards abolishing indenture. This body, placed in Calcutta, included a legislative council overseen by a Governor-General and a Viceroy. The position of viceroy, particularly under Lord Hardinge in the 1910s, was integral to the abolition of indenture. The legislative council consisted at the time of

[6] An examination of the working of the Fiji government can be found in BriJ Lal's *Broken Waves; A History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century.*
[7] K. L. Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants*, (Melbourne: Oxford University, 1962), 82.
[8] Ibid, 82.

indenture both official (British appointed) and non-official (elected) members. The non-official members did not have voting power, serving instead as advisors.

Argument

The system of Indian indentured labor in Fiji, having existed for decades, continued relatively unexamined until the 1910s, when the Indian populace and legislature became more interested in their citizens overseas. Scholars have examined the effect of the Indian government on the end of indenture, but few have looked at the effect of Christianity. The majority of the most vocal critics of indenture were either clergymen or missionaries. These men and women were typically on the margins of the church. Even if they were in Fiji, the critics were those who felt marginalized or underappreciated in their position. They spoke out against indenture in spite of the Fijian Wesley Methodist Church's complacency with the system. This complacency was due the financial ties of the church and a lack of success in reaching the Indian people. This paper will argue that it took men and women of faith, not tied to the government or church establishment, to unearth the abuses of the Fijian indenture system.

Historiography

The literature regarding the end of indenture in Fiji seems to fall into one of two camps. The first camp highlights the impacts and actions of the Indian National Congress and other Indian nationalist reformers against the 'evils' of indenture. The other camp focuses more on the reports that helped expose the realities of indenture. Though this thesis will fall more into the second camp, it will differ in that it seeks to look at the Christian motivations behind many of the most important reports, rather than the purely moral or political reasons that much of the literature suggests. Because Christianity is not the focus of the literature regarding the end of indenture, there is very little said about the church in Fiji. What is said focuses more on the economic burdens placed on the church by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company rather than frustration with Indian evangelism.

Literature dealing with Indian Politicians

Scholars agree that politicians in India were a driving force behind the end of indenture in the beginning of the twentieth century. Indian politicians like M. K. Gandhi, G. K. Gokhale and the Indian Viceroy Lord Hardinge took tangible actions towards ending indenture.[9] Subsequently, most literature about the end of indenture has focused on the actions of these politicians.

[9] Tinker, *A New System of Slavery,* 280. Though Gandhi published many influential reports in the 1910's condemning the indenture system, most of his work consisted of gaining equal rights for former indentured

Hugh Tinker's *A New System of Slavery* was and continues to be one of the most encompassing and influential accounts about Indian indenture, its demise and its aftermath. As this thesis focuses specifically on indenture in Fiji, indenture in other colonies will be mentioned only briefly. *A New System of Slavery* is an excellent resource for understanding how indenture gradually dissipated in the large majority of British colonies. With regards to indenture in Fiji, Tinker mentions every major report made about the system and describes them in brief. Tinker focuses largely on the actions and impacts of Indian Nationalist politicians, especially those of the Indian National Congress. The Congress supported the Indian independence movement and later became the dominant political party in India. To these leaders, Tinker argued, indenture was degrading the morals of Indian race and made India a "helot" on the world stage.[10] He specifically looked at the actions of Gandhi in South Africa, his work beyond, and his many efforts to end indenture.[11] Tinker did focus on the actions of C. F. Andrews in depth, but not his motivations.

A PHD thesis that deals specifically with this topic is "The Abolition of Indentured Emigration and Politics of Indian Nationalism. 1894-1917." This thesis claimed that, after the details of indenture were brought to light, "the anti-indenture movement came to encompass almost every group in India."[12] This was because it became a "direct struggle between Indian national honor and the capitalist interests of

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Indians in South Africa in the early twentieth century. G K Gokhale, a senior leader of the Indian National Congress, the political party that pushed for Indian independence, will be discussed later in the thesis.

[10] Tinker, *A New System of Slavery,* 355.

[11] Ibid., 347.

[12] Karen Ray, "The Abolition of Indentured Emigration and the Politics of Indian Nationalism, 1894-1917," PhD diss., McGill University, July 1980, Abstract.

colonial enterprise."[13] Ray specifically looked at the impacts of Gokhale and Gandhi, but also spent significant time on Lord Hardinge, the Indian viceroy.

Brij Lal, the seminal Indo-Fijian historian, had a similar view regarding the end of indenture. His book *Broken Waves: Fiji in the 20th Century* deals mainly with the political happenings among the Fijians, but also includes an account of the end and aftermath of indenture. He mentioned reports that helped end indenture, including the McNeill, Sanderson, Burton, Andrews and Garnham reports.[14] He concluded, however, with the sentiments of the Indian nationalists regarding indenture—the view that indenture was a "badge of helotry" that Indians sought to erase.[15]

Literature focusing on Reports of Indenture

K L Gillon's *Fiji's Indian Migrants* was one of the first major histories of the Indians in Fiji. It overviewed the history of Indo-Fijians from the beginning of indenture to its official conclusion in 1920. While Gillion focused briefly on the popular opinion in India, his main occupation regarding the abolition of indenture was C. F. Andrews. Gillion extensively looks at the actions taken by Andrews surrounding the abolition of indenture. His account was interspersed with the opinions and reactions of the Indian populace and politicians. Gillion, however, did not focus particularly on the motivations of Andrews.

[13] Ray, "The Abolition of Indentured Emigration," Abstract.
[14] These reports helped expose the true nature of the indenture system in the 1910s.
[15] Lal, *Broken Waves*, 13.

Another earlier history of the Indians in Fiji was Adrian Meyer's *Indians in Fiji*. Regarding abolition in Fiji, Meyer only really mentions the reports that influenced abolition, specifically those of J. W. Burton and C. F. Andrews—but these only in passing.[16] Meyer speaks of the moral motivations of the two men, but mentions neither the impact of their reports or their Christianity.

This paper shares a great affinity with the master's thesis entitled "Contentious Exploitation? The Abolition of Indentured Labour Migration from India to Fiji, 1910-1920" by Emma Alexander. Her thesis deals with specific instances that facilitated the end of indenture in Fiji, including the publication of the Sanderson Commission, *The Fiji of To-day, My Twenty-One Years in the Fiji Islands* and the reports of Andrews. Alexander deals extensively with the development of protests over the immorality of indenture.[17] Alexander also briefly examines the Christianity of Andrews. Alexander's focus, however, was not on the Christianity of Andrews, but on his activism. She focused broadly on the reports that facilitated the end of indenture, rather than focusing on uniquely Christian ones.

Literature on the Methodist Church in Fiji

Most literature about the early Methodist Church in Fiji deals with its successes among the Fiji people, and any discussion of the church's relations with the Indians is brief and pessimistic. One particular book that dealt with the church and Indo-Fijians is

[16] Adrian Mayer, *Indians in Fiji,* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 21.
[17] Emma Alexander, "Contentious Exploitation? The Abolition of Indentured Labour Migration from India to Fiji, 1910-1920," Master's thesis, University of Victoria, 1994, 78.

the third volume of Harold Wood's *Overseas Missions of the Australasia Methodist Church*. This book offers an extensive history of the Methodist church in Fiji and its dealings with the Indians. Regarding indenture, Wood discusses the lack of effort towards reaching the Indo-Fijians and the apathy regarding their abolition. The book focuses mainly on the possible monetary ties the Methodist church had with the Colonial Sugar Refining company—the main consumer of Indian labor and a fierce proponent of the continuation of indenture. Wood, however, did not connect the lack of success in the Indian section of the church with their positive or apathetic opinions about indenture.

Conclusions

There are few books that deal specifically with the abolition of indenture in Fiji, but there are many papers and volumes that broadly discuss abolition. The papers and books mentioned previously do not comprise the entirety of literature about the topic, but do represent the various opinions about the subject. Scholarship about the abolition of Indian indenture typically focuses on the actions of the Indian politicians and public, or focuses on the reports that shed light on the exploitative system. There is no scholarship that focuses primarily on the actions of the church and Christianity regarding the abolition of indenture. As Christian *individuals* had much to do with abolition, it is important to look at the simultaneous action of individuals and apathy of the majority of the Fijian church regarding indenture.

Fiji and the System of Indian Indenture

Historical Background

Fiji was and continues to be an incredibly culturally diverse island group. First occupied by Polynesians thousands of years ago, the islands were subsequently inhabited by waves of Melanesians, Europeans and then Indians. [18] In order to understand the influx of Indian immigrants to Fiji, one must first examine the annexation of Fiji by Britain and the early years of colonial rule.

Fiji, for much of its history, was an island group much like many others in the pacific. Governed by various competing tribal leaders, the populace lived and worked in small settlements protected by these chiefs. The chiefs constantly fought for power and revenge, but the small size of the island resulted in relatively bloodless conflicts.[19] The inhabitants of Fiji were famously known as cannibals. This act was done in order to gain the power, or 'mana' of the deceased.[20]

European contact on Fiji from explorers, whalers, and 'beachcombers' had occured for centuries. [21] These outsiders brought culture and, most importantly, rifles. Rifles only escalated the intense competition between Fijian chiefs and led to what is

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[18] The Pacific is divided into three sections; Micronesia in the northwest (close to China), Melanesia in the southwest (Close to Indonesia) and Polynesia in the west.

[19] J. D. Legge, *Britain in Fiji, 1858-1880,* (London: Macmillian, 1958), 9.

[20] Alfred Goldsborough Mayor, "The History of Fiji*", The Scientific Monthly,* Vol.1, No.1 (Oct., 1915), 18-35. "Mana" was a broad term for the spiritual power of the deceased. This power was transferred through consumption of the deceased's flesh.

[21] These were usually Australians or other pacific Europeans that traded and scavenged on the outskirts of pacific islands.

known as the "Fiji Wars." The arrival of Wesleyan Methodist Christian missionaries, however, brought some of the most marked change. Arriving in Fiji in 1835 from the nearby island chain of Tonga in 1835, the missionaries achieved almost universal conversion by 1860.[22] These conversions may or may not have been genuine for all Fijians, but most Fijian islanders were at least Christian in name by this time. The missionaries achieved this feat by focusing on the conversion of chiefs, who in turn would forcibly convert those beneath them. The missionaries thus gained significant power and influence among the Fijians, becoming unofficial judges and lawmakers.[23]

Despite pressure from European traders and planters in the Fiji isles and several offers of cession, Britain remained reluctant to make Fiji an official British colony. The reason behind the official annexation on July 25, 1874 is a subject of debate among historians. One precipitating factor was the Fiji cotton boom of the 1860s that brought hundreds of European planters to the islands.[24] Yet another was the human rights violations that occurred in the region. Europeans purchased Fijian wives as was the local custom, and often *multiple* women for each man. Pacific islanders were also trafficked as forced labor in the region. Due to these violations, groups like the Wesleyan Methodists and the Aborigines Protection Society called for annexation in order to establish order in the islands.[25]

Still another reason was the presence of American and German interests in the region. While Germany was present through commercial enterprises like the House of Godeffroy (a German Pacific trading company), America took a more direct involvement

[22] Legge, *Britain in Fiji,* 10.
[23] Ibid., 24.
[24] Ibid., 26.
[25] Ibid., 22.

in Fijian affairs.[26] According to an incident report from the British foreign affairs office, a certain Commander Boutwell, officer on the war ship St. Mary, charged the Fijian chief Cakobau 45,000 dollars for grievances against the American consul on Fiji in 1949. He gave them until 1867 to pay the debt and Cakombau, having little options, fraudulently 'sold' 200,000 acres of land to Australian investors, much of that land actually belonging to rival chief Ma'afu.[27] Cakombau, laden with debt, became a puppet ruler under a coalition of European planters that was considered a 'constitutional monarchy.'[28] These planters called for annexation, either by Britain or America. This incident, combined with concerns over labor kidnapping, increasing commercial enterprise and the beginning of the less isolationist Disraeli administration in Britain, led to a commission on Fiji in 1873. The commission determined that annexation was unavoidable.[29] Fiji was made a British colony on July 25, 1874.

The colony of Fiji was seen as having incredible economic potential by Australian and British investors of the day, particularly through sugar production. A woman travel writer by the name of C. F. Gordon Cumming summed up economic sentiments in the quote, "I believe Fiji to be an admirable field for the investment of large capital, whether

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[26] Legge, *Britain in Fiji,* 26.

[27] "Memorandum by consul March respecting claim of the US on King Thakombau for 45,000 dollars*",* Doc. 3 of *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print,* Ed. Ian Nish, Part 1, Series E, Volume 30, (University Publications of America). Cakombau was a powerful chief on the Fijian islands. Despite his competition, he told Europeans that he was the 'King of Fiji.' They believed him. Thus, it was Cakombau who was tasked with bearing the heavy American debt. Ma'afu was a Tongan chief that had left his home and conquered significant territory on the northern part of the main island of Fiji.

[28] W. D. McIntyre, "Anglo-American Rivalry in the Pacific: The British Annexation of the Fiji Islands in 1874", *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (Nov., 1960), 366. In this Constitutional monarchy was created by European planters primarily to get Fiji annexed by a European power. They made Cakombau the leader in order to save face before the rest of the Fijian peoples.

[29] Ibid., 376.

in sugar or coffee estates. Sugar grows spontaneously, is of the first quality, and has practically boundless market in Australia."[30]

The problem that quickly arose, however, was labor. Sir Arthur Gordon Hamilton, the first governor of Fiji, was a champion of the native islander against the "plantocracy," or the privileged class of European planters. He desired to protect native culture and thought that plantation work would destroy it. Utilizing the then-current system, Gordon governed the Fijians through his use of chiefly rule, having them collect communal taxes from every village and encouraging the continuation of subsistence agriculture as opposed to plantation work. [31] The Council of Chiefs was constructed to provide accountability and communication between the Fijians and the Colonial Government. It was the chiefs, however, that possessed true authority over their people. This system, combined with a flu epidemic that killed a fourth of the native population, excluded the Fijians as a source of labor. The other option, the temporary contracting of labor from other Pacific islands (a common practice at the time), was declared insufficient, particularly because of the islanders' propensity to die of disease in Fiji.[32] To fill the labor gap, the next governor of Fiji, John Bates Thurston, looked to the super abundant population of India.[33] Thurston wanted to extend the widespread practice of Indian indentured labor to his colony. Cakombau had already tried to obtain indentured labor in Fiji, but India refused. Now, with Fiji being part of the British empire, Thurston found it much easier to acquire it.

[30] C. F. Gordon Cumming, *At Home in Fiji,* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1881), 8.
[31] Lal, *Broken Waves,* 13.
[32] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants*, 2.
[33] Lal, *Broken Waves,* 13.

Introduction to Indian Indenture

The first Indians arrived in Fiji in 1879. From this date until 1916, Fiji received around 60,000 Indian migrants, two thirds of which remained on the islands. Fijian indenture, in its most basic form, was a five year labor where laborers were obligated to stay at one plantation for the entirety of their contract. They received a free passage to Fiji and earned a free trip home if they worked an additional five years under the indenture system.[34] The Indians lived in rows of shacks near the plantations called 'lines.'[35] Indentured laborers were given 'tasks,' or certain amounts of work per day.[36] These tasks were completed in order to earn full wage. Tasks were at first designed to represent the amount of work the average male or female could do in a day.[37] The Indians had two levels of authority over them—first sirdars (Indian overseers), then European overseers.[38]

The idea of introducing Indians to plantation work was, at first, not supported by the Fiji sugar planters. They regarded the Indians as weak or 'haughty' compared to Pacific island labor. The Fiji government also found it difficult to find consumers for the new form of labor until the arrival of the large Australian Colonial Sugar Company. This company bought up the early Indian labor and helped both the company and the system

[34] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 16.
[35] Burton, *The Fiji of To-day*, 323.
[36] These tasks dealt with how much sugar cane a worker had to harvest before they could go home. They were primarily measured in square feet of cane field. 'Lines' were incredibly crowded and unclean. Little space was given for the occupants, who were often forced to share rooms. It was in these shacks that cooking was also done.
[37] Gillion, Fiji's Indian Migrants, 83. The amount of work in a task would increase over time.
[38] Mayer*, Indians in Fiji*, 21.

of indenture to grab a foothold in the colony.[39] The Colonial Sugar Company gained a near monopoly on the sugar business when sugar prices dropped in the 1880s, forcing smaller planters into bankruptcy.[40] The CSR thus became synonymous with indenture.

Indian indenture had been occurring in the British empire for quite some time. Shortly after the abolition of slavery in 1833, investors began looking for a way to fill the new labor gap. Indenture within the empire filled the gap and, as some have later argued, even replaced it.[41] After first suffering criticism, indenture was spread widely, utilizing both African and Indian labor. Notable destinations for Indian laborers included Trinidad, British Guiana, Mauritius, and Fiji—as well as the Dutch colony of Surinam.[42] The majority of British politicians thought of indenture as a boon to the colonies, the migrants and India. An example of the archetypal 'successful Indian' in Fiji was Ranjit Singh. He wrote about his own life in 1918 that, in Fiji, he and his wife "made [their] fortune enough to maintain [them] until [they] died."[43] Examples like this embodied what Britain envisioned occurring because of indenture—prosperity and the benefit of two lands—the colonies through labor and India through returned wealth. These types of stories were, as the rest of this thesis will suggest, the significant minority.

The Europeans, and specifically those involved with the CSR, supported the indenture system because of the assurance of a steady supply of labor. The Fijian natives

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[39] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 71.
[40] Meyer, *Indians in Fiji,* 19.
[41] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 19.
[42] James McNeill, Lal Chaimman, *Report on the condition of Indian immigrants in the four British colonies: Trinidad, British Guiana or Demerara, Jamaica and Fiji and in the Dutch colony of Surinam or Dutch Guiana,* (Simla, India; Government Central Press, 1914).
[43] Ranjit Signh, "Statement of Ranjit Singh an Phulknar of Deauba," Enclosure No. IV in Fiji Dispatch No. 56 of the 27th February, 1918, CO 83/138-47582, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.

were apathetic towards indenture. The Fijians and Indians had different lands, cultures and occupations. It wasn't until the Indo-Fijians began pushing for political sovereignty in the 1920s that there were large conflicts between the Indians and Fijians.[44] In India, though, there was a consistent feeling of wariness and anger towards the system. Politicians in the Indian legislature saw indenture as degrading to Indians. Indian citizens resented the exploits of the arkati, the recruiters for indenture, who would often lie about wages, the amount of work assigned per day or even where Fiji was actually located.[45] For many Indians, the promise of a return passage to India was a false one. To cross the ocean (the 'black water', as it was known in Hinduism) would permanently destroy one's caste.[46] There would be no turning back. Even when Indians got to Fiji, repatriation was difficult. Very few Indians were willing to work the full ten years required for a free passage back, and less than half of all Indians actually went back to India.[47]

Despite the general criticism in India, indenture continued into the twentieth century. By 1905, Europeans and Fijians had representation in the Fiji legislature, with ten official members and ten Fijians nominated by the Council of Chiefs.[48] Indians, however, were not included. Even those no longer under the indenture system, known as "free" Indians, were excluded. Indians were being ignored in the realms of policy, representation and education. This deficit of education was only made up by the introduction and proliferation of missionary schools from 1898 onward. The church, in

[44] Lal, *Broken Waves,* 87.
[45] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 41.
[46] Ibid., 33.
[47] Mayer, *Indians in Fiji,* 24.
[48] Lal, *Broken Waves,* 35.

fact, was later subsidized by both the government and the CSR to provide the education for Indian children *they* were not willing to provide.[49]

An Overview of Abolition

Indians in Fiji, possessing little education and representation, were not able to fight against the system that largely oppressed them. Indenture was largely ended with outside assistance.

The reason that the end of indenture in other colonies is not extensively discussed in this thesis is that the immoralities and injustices in Fiji were given prominence by the abolition movement. In the words of Gokhale, by the 1910s indenture had been prohibited in South Africa and phased out in Mauritius. In Malay, indenture was gradually phased out for economic reasons as well.[50] In Fiji, however, indenture was allowed to continue.[51] There was abolition in smaller colonies like Trinidad, British Guiana and even Dutch colonies like Surinam, but the numbers of laborers were small. The system was waning in these colonies, and they have largely overlooked by historians since. Fiji is the primary area discussed in this thesis because of two reasons; (1) it was the colony that was primarily focused upon by abolitionists and (2) the injustice existing in Fiji allowed for a sudden and violent reaction in India when it was revealed.

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[49] A. Harold Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church,* Vol III, Fiji-Indian and Rotuma, (Victoria, AU: The Aldersgate Press, 1978), 45.
[50] Tinker, *A New System of Slavery,* 315.
[51] Gopal Krishna Gokhale, "PROHIBITION OF INDENTURED LABOUR" in Vol. 1 of *Speeches and Writings of Gopal Krishna Gokhale,* ed. Patwardhan and Ambeker, (Poona-New York, 1962), 360.

The system of indenture had received criticism from the Indian populace for some years before its abolition, but the idea of the abolition of indenture did not arise in force until the 1910s. The evils suffered by the indentured Indians in South Africa were famously fought by Mahatma Gandhi in the early 1900s. Indenture would end there in 1908.[52] Further action was taken by activists, however, when a 3-pound poll tax was implemented in order to encourage Indians to repatriate. Gandhi and other activists fought until it was abolished and indenture was "dealt a death blow" in the colony.[53] Among these activists was the Reverend C. F. Andrews, who Gandhi later name during an anti-indenture speech as a "true and real friend of India."[54]

The British government, in 1909, published the report of a commission on emigration from India by what was called the Sanderson Committee. This was the first report on indenture in over thirty years and spoke very favorably of the economic benefits of the system.[55] The Indian government was more than happy with these results as indenture was under public scrutiny in the colony. The only major criticism, and one that would be brought up in Fiji two years later, was the large number of penal sanctions on plantations against indentured laborers. The penalties occurred when indentured laborers were unable to complete the task that they were assigned. These tasks were often much too large, leading to the punishment of numerous Indians rather than the creation of better relations on the plantations. The Fiji government finally pushed some judicial reforms past the planters when they reminded the planters of the continuing

[52] Tinker, *A New System of Slavery,* 317.
[53] C. F. Andrews, "Tribute to Mr. Gandhi—Rev. Andrews' Letter," *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta, India), November, 12, 1914, 6.
[54] Mahatma Gandhi, "INDENTURE INDIAN LABOUR," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), October 30, 1915, 5.
[55] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 164.

distrust of indenture by Liberal Government officials back in England. [56] More reforms of the system of indenture might have occurred due to the outside pressure of the Liberal party in England if immediate and harsh criticism had not occurred through the exposés and criticism of the 1910's.

Some of the first criticism came from the Indian legislature in 1910 when the sanctions in Natal against 'free' Indians, including the 3-pound tax, were attacked through an immigration ban by the Indian government.[57] G. K. Gokhale, a prominent Indian non-official member of the legislative council known for his support of Indian self-rule and education, called the Indian legislature in 1910 and 1912 to go beyond this sanction and abolish the indenture system entirely. In his 1912 speech before the Indian Legislative Council, Gokhale systematically attacked the system, claiming that it forced laborers to bind themselves to a distant land, and completely ignored the penal clauses that applied to any indentured laborer who failed to complete their work.[58] Gokhale's resolution would, in 1912, receive the support of every non-official member of the Indian Legislative Council, while receiving none of the official votes.[59] Gokhale would die soon after, but made an accurate prediction at the end of the proceeding that the motion would "be brought forward again and again, till [it was carried] to a successful issue" because indenture effected India's "national respect."[60] Opinion on indenture would

[56] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 168.
[57] Ibid., 168. Natal was the region of South Africa where indenture was mainly concentrated.
[58] Gokhale, "PROHIBTION OF INDENTURED LABOUR," 350.
[59] "THE INDENTURED SYSTEM." *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), November 4, 1915, 9. It is important to note that all the official members were British.
[60] Gokhale, "PROHIBITON OF INDENTURED LABOUR," 368. Indenture was seen as a backwards system and, in some extreme cases, as a second form of slavery. Indian politicians, and those particularly of the Indian nationalist camp, saw the benefits for India in international PR if indenture was ended.

continue to impact the political atmosphere in the years to come.[61] Soon, the Indian populace and legislature began paying more attention to indenture. It would take outside voices, however, to *fully* bring the system into the light.

Reports and Exposés

According to the provisions of the Sanderson Committee, James McNeill and Lala Chiman Lal were sent to observe indenture in several colonies in 1913, creating a report that contained a significant focus on the colony of Fiji. Overall, the two men were particularly favorable to the system. They noted that indenture largely brought favorable economic prospects to the Indians, taking care to note that the justice system was fair and that penal trials were down considerably from past years.[62] Their major suggestions included increasing education opportunities for Indian children and the leasing of land to 'free' Indians.[63] Due to Arthur Gordon Hamilton's early pro-Fijian legislation, Fijians owned most, if not all, of the extra land on Fiji. They were, however, using it for "a very inferior form of cultivation in an insignificant portion of the cultivable land."[64] McNeill and Lal suggested that the extra land should be bought up and leased to Indians no longer in the indenture system. Other suggestions included reforms to Indian marriage legislation, increased female recruiting and the ability for laborers to commute, or pay off, their contract before it was finished.[65] These suggestions, while insightful, were

[61] Mayer, *Indians in Fiji,* 21.
[62] McNeill and Lal, *Report on the Condition of Indian Immigrants in Four British Colonies,* 254.
[63] Ibid., 266.
[64] Ibid., 261.
[65] Memorandum from James McNeill and response from Bickham Escott, Gov. of Fiji, Enclosure No. II in Fiji Dispatch No. 445 of 27th October 1913, CO 83/41992, Colonial Office Records, British National Archive.

hardly revolutionary. Out of all reports and investigations on Indian indenture, McNeill and Lal's report was the most forgiving. Because of this, it was the report of choice for planters and officials in Fiji in the years to come. Bickham Escott, the governor of Fiji at the time, was very open to the reforms suggested.[66] The economics of indenture, however, was not the focal point of the opposition to the system. In the following years, several influential reports and exposés dealing with injustices and immorality in the colony would be published and widely disseminated in India, Britain and even Australia.

J. W. Burton, a missionary to the Indians in Fiji, was one of the first people to openly discuss the specific injustices of the indenture system in Fiji. His *book The Fiji of To-day* was particularly influential on Indian public opinion of indenture. His book, along with letters from Hannah Dudley, a prominent missionary to the Fiji Indians, discussing the state of womanhood in Fiji, was quoted in newspapers around India.[67] The book was translated, published and widely disseminated among the populace of India through physical copies and word of mouth. *The Fiji of To-day* would go on to influence the opinion of men like Gokhale and C. F. Andrews, an important Indian religious and political figure who was later involved with the Indian independence movement.

Totaram Sanadhya, a former indentured laborer in Fiji, arrived in India in 1914 to campaign against the system that had oppressed him. He found many sympathizers in India ready to hear his accusations against indenture.[68] He published a book of his

[66] Memorandum from James McNeill and response from Bickham Esscott, Gov. of Fiji, Enclosure No. II in Fiji Dispatch No. 445 of 27th October 1913, CO 83/41992, Colonial Office Records, British National Archive.
[67] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 174.
[68] Ibid., 175.

experiences and accusations against Fiji in the 1914 called *My Twenty-One Years in the Fiji Islands*. Sanadhya's book was the only widely publicized account of Indian indenture written by a former indentured laborer. John Kelley, in the introduction to the modern translation of the book, claimed that, upon the book's 1914 publication, "it caused a sensation beyond even the hopes of its 'author' (Sanadhya) and 'editor.'"[69] He also stated that "Rev. Charles Andrews, who himself wrote an influential report on indentured labour, gave *My 21 Years* great credit for exposing injustices, rousing public opinion, and thus helping to end the indenture system.[70]

G. K. Gokhale died in 1915, leaving behind a dying wish that others would continue his work towards ending indenture. C. F. Andrews, having read *The Fiji of To-day* and having been horrified to hear that indenture was to be resumed, took it upon himself to pursue this cause.[71] He wrote arguably the most influential report on indenture, the 1916's *Report on Indentured Labour in Fiji*. In it, he and his companion W. W. Pearson went to Fiji in 1915 and chronicled b [][the moral injustices of the system. This report was widely received and dispersed via newspapers and journals.

Andrews' report arrived right before Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the influential non-official council member and future Indian independence advocate, moved the abolition of indenture before the Central Legislature in 1916.[72] On March 20, 1916, Lord Hardinge, the Indian Viceroy accepted Malaviya's motion in the Imperial

[69] Banarsidas Chaturvedi was the 'editor' of the book, transcribing and rewriting the story as it was told orally by Sanadhya.
[70] Sanadhya, *My Twenty-One Years in the Fiji Islands*, 7.
[71] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 178.
[72] "INDENTURED LABOUR," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), March 20, 1916, 3.

Legislative Council, promising to abolish indenture "in due course."[73] In the meantime, indenture would continue, but the colonies were urged to immediately abolish the penal sanctions against their indentured laborers.[74] Indenture was abolished in multiple colonies with this motion. Later critics of indenture argued that the injustices committed against the indentured Indian in Fiji unfairly overshadowed the experience of indenture in colonies like Trinidad, Jamaica and British Guiana.[75] However, it was these grievances against Fiji that seemed to spark the most controversy and provide ammunition against the entire system of indenture.

The war caused, to the relief of the opponents of indenture, a suspension of indenture due to both the need for ships and the threat of submarine attack on shipping in the Indian Ocean. Lord Hardinge was the Viceroy of India at the time and had been a staunch opponent of indenture for several years previous. He promised that indenture would not continue after the war. This was the first so-called end to indenture, though it would not last. Lord Chelmsford became the Viceroy shortly after Hardinge promised to abolish indenture. Chelmsford, however, took a much more lax position on abolition. In a statement he made about carrying out "Hardinge's promise," he fended off criticism by saying that the Indian government had "already consulted the local Governments very fully when asking their view as to the precautions which [would] be required after the abolition of indenture."[76] To many, this appeared like the Viceroy was stalling.

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[73] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 181.
[74] "ABOLITION OF INDENTURED LABOUR—THE VICEROY'S SPEECH," *The Tribune* (Lahore, India), March 22, 1916, 3.
[75] "INDENTURED INDIANS in British Guiana, Jamaica and Surinam," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), November 15, 1919, 3.
[76] "INDIA. Imperial Legislative Council. FIRST MEETINGS OF AUTUMN SESSION. Speech by Lord Chelmsford." *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), September 7, 1916, 4. Hardinge had promised to end indenture "in due course" right before his term ended. He urged the legislators after him to fulfill this promise, but no specific law was put forth immediately.

C. F. Andrews was not satisfied with the promise to end of indenture, but instead continued fighting to abolish the system immediately. He claimed in several newspapers that "shiploads of new Indian labourers, men and women, [were] being sent out to Fiji in the proportion of 3 men to one woman," which promoted "a legalised form of prostitution" on the island.[77] C. F. Andrews claimed publicly that it had been "openly stated in Fiji that an assurance [had] been given from London that the system" of indenture would be "continued for another five years."[78] He and others claimed that the delay was caused by a combined effort of the Fiji government, the CSR and the Fiji Planter's Association to convince the Colonial Office to promise the continuation of emigration after the war. Though Fiji had been implementing reforms in response to public outrage, opinion of indenture remained hostile.

In the following years, a suitable replacement for indenture was sought. In mid-1917, an interdepartmental conference was held at the India Office at London with attendees comprising of representatives from the colonies. The main idea that came from the conference was "one of aided colonization."[79] The emigrants would receive free passage to various colonies on the promise that they work on one plantation for at least six months and work three subsequent years in the agricultural industry. After this, the colonies were to settle these immigrants on cheap land.[80] Special care was given to create the position of Protector of Emigrants in the colonies to provide careful

[77] "INDENTURED INDIAN LABOUR," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India) January 20, 1917, 6.
[78] C. F. Andrews, "Indentured Labour. LETTER FROM MR. ANDREWS. Press Comments," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), January 1, 1917, 2.
[79] Arthur Steel Maitland, "Report of the Inter-Departmental Conference on Assisted Emigration from India, to British Guiana, Trinidad, Jamaica, and Fiji," July 14, 1917, CO 83/758-30, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives, 2.
[80] Maitland, "Report on the Inter-Departmental Conference…," 3.

governmental supervision of the laborers.[81] This scheme was widely accepted by the CSR and officials in Fiji, who were eager to continue some form of labor immigration in Fiji. Andrews, though he had been opposed to indenture as it stood in his first report, was open to the possibility of the continuation of assisted immigration. He changed his mind, however, in 1918 after the conference. In a telegram to the India office, he wrote that he considered the provisions "entirely unsatisfactory."[82]

Andrews was by no means the only one dissatisfied with the continuation of indentured labor and the possibility of assisted immigration. Various citizens' meetings arose in 1917 to protest the continuation of indenture. Citizens from Bombay came together to advocate the "total prohibition of recruited or indentured labour and [to advocate] that in any case the system should not be continued after 31st May 1917, whether the [then] forthcoming conference in London [had] met and reported or not by that date."[83] The conference referenced was, of course, the conference over assisted immigration. Public meetings condemning the indenture system were held in North India, South India and Bengal with organizations ranging from women's meetings to 'Piecegoods Merchants Associations.'[84] In one particular instance, the citizens of Lucknow met together and "enthusiastically" decided to create an anti-indenture league.[85] Much of this outrage was caused by anger regarding the moral decay of the

[81] "EMIGRATION TO COLONIES, Inter-Departmental Conference," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), September 14, 1917, 7.
[82] C. F. Andrews, "Memorandum on Emigration to Fiji by Rev. C. F. Andrews," March 15, 1918, CO 323/778-57, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.
[83] M. C. Seton, "Telegrams urging the immediate abolition of Indian Indentured emigration," March 16, 1917, CO 323/753-13, Colonial Records, British National Archives.
[84] M. C. Seton, "Telegrams urging the immediate abolition of Indian Indentured emigration," March 16, 1917, CO 323/753-13, Colonial Records, British National Archives. Piecegoods merchants sold textiles. They saw the false recruitment occurring because of indenture as a threat to their own labor supply.
[85] UNITED PROVINCES. Indentured Labour. MEETING AT LUCKNOW." *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), March 3, 1917, 3.

Indians under indenture, while a large portion of it was anger with the recruitment system. Assisted emigration that would involve recruiters (or arkatis) was thus condemned by much of the public.

Several reports regarding the moral decay of the indentured laborers arose in the years before 1920, including another report by C. F. Andrews in 1917 and a report on the social and moral conditions of Indo-Fijian women by Florence Garnham of Australia. Due to pressure from the Indian public, Indian legislators and Andrews himself, the end date for abolition moved backwards from 1921 to August 1920.[86] The Indian government, at the request of Andrews, pushed for abolition by January 1, 1920.

An unofficial delegation was sent from Fiji to India in hopes of convincing the Indian government to continue assisted immigration.[87] The Anglican Bishop of Polynesia was even sent as a representative for the planters. This, however, did little to convince the Indian government.[88] The Colonial Office agreed to abolishing indenture on January 1, 1920 in any plantations that did not meet the reforms suggested by Andrews in his 1917 report. [89] When, on that date, only half of the plantations qualified for abolition, the Colonial Office decided to end indenture for all Indo-Fijians on January 1, 1920 in order to fight against the possibility of insurrection or dissention,

[86] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 188.
[87] "Indian Immigration; Supports suggestion for an unofficial mission from Fiji to India," May 26, 1919, CO 83/146-31596, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.
[88] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 189. The Anglican church in Fiji was primarily involved with the European settlers on the island, thus their involvement with the wishes of the planters.
[89] "Indian Immigration Mission to India," July 9, 1919, CO 83/146-40649, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.

providing compensation for every plantation owner impacted.[90] The start of the new decade thus brought an end to the oppressive system of Indian indentured labor.

The Three Governments' Opinions of Abolition

The abolition of Indian indenture was a topic that stretched across multiple continents. Indenture, however, was not regarded with the same mindset in all places. To Britain, it was a colonial economic institution that was not worth interfering with. In Fiji, indenture was an absolutely necessary institution that the planter class relied on for their livelihood. In India, attitudes ranged from apathy to support to the fervent opposition that would eventually lead to the abolition of indenture.

India and Britain

Indian opinion was generally negative towards the system of indenture. Criticism largely began in South Africa with Gandhi, C. F. Andrews and others.[91] After the debacle with the 3 pound tax on Indians in South Africa, Gandhi compared the system to slavery, saying that "it was a hindrance to national growth and national dignity."[92] C. F. Andrews admired Gandhi's work and wrote to the *New India;* "I know no way in which to honour [Ghandi] more worthily than by striving to break away from the indentured labour system."[93] The next wave of criticism came from Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the

[90] "Telegram from the Governor of Fiji to the Secretary of State for the Colonies," November 12, 1919, CO 83/146-64752, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.
[91] The struggle for abolition in South Africa is only mentioned briefly, as it is beyond the scope of this thesis.
[92] Mahatma Gandhi, "INDENTURED INDIAN LABOR—Lecture by Mr. Gandhi," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), October 30, 1915, 5.
[93] "TRIBUTE TO MR. GANDHI—REV. MR. ANDREWS' LETTER," *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta, India), November 12, 1914, 6.

aforementioned non-official legislative council member. Gokhale, in 1912, "denounced the [indenture] system as a monstrous one, 'iniquitous in itself, based on fraud and maintained by force,' and so opposed to modern sentiments of sentiments of justice and humanity as to be a grave blot on the civilization of any country that tolerates it."[94] The non-official council, representing the voters of India and containing many native Indians, voted unanimously to abolish it at that time.[95] The report of McNeil and Lal would quiet the opposition towards abolition for a while, itself looking favorably on indenture, but criticism would once again arise.

Opinion would forever turn against indenture in 1915 and 1916 due in part to Andrews' report and in part to grass roots movements and organizations like the Marwari Association and the Anti-Indenture League. The Marwari Association, created to protect the Marwari people of South India, chafed against the "fraudulent recruitment" that was occurring in Calcutta.[96] They would later oppose the conclusion of the 1917 inter-departmental conference held in London, hoping that the government would "see the justice of disallowing further emigration."[97] Similarly, an anti-indenture league was created to fight indenture among whose members was South African crusader and friend of Ghandi H. S. L. Polak.[98] Polak would continue to give scathing speeches against indenture throughout this time period, including a speech in which he declared it the responsibility of every Indian citizen to get the government to abolish this

[94] "THE INDENTURED SYSTEM," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), November 4, 1915, 9.
[95] Ibid.
[96] "Fraudulent Recruitment of Labour," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), August 21, 1915, 6. Recruiters here were giving false details about the pay, location and amount of work in order to earn extra commissions.
[97] "INDIAN EMIGRATION. CALCUTTA MAWARIS FAVOUR TOTAL PROHIBITION." *Ceylon Observer* (Colombo, Sri Lanka) November 15, 1917, 67.
[98] "MR. AND MRS. POLAK. An Evening Party," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), September 9, 1917, 6.

"damnable system."[99] More opposition amongst the India populace included the previously mentioned citizen's meetings in 1917.[100]

While the majority of the Indian populace seemed to be firmly against indenture, the British officials took a more restrained opinion. When Gokhale presented his resolution abolishing indenture, every non-official member may have voted for the proposition, but every official—British appointed—member voted against it.[101] Britain itself seemed to remain rather aloof during the time period. The Secretary of State for the Indian Office, Chamberlain, allowed the passing of the Indian government's 1916 resolution for abolition simply on the proviso "that time be allowed to enable the colonies hitherto availing themselves of this form of labour to adjust themselves to the new conditions."[102] In regards to further opinions of the British India Office, not much more was found. The government of Britain seemed to agree with and support the decision of India regarding abolition.

Between 1912 and 1916, public opinion would challenge these officials. Under Chelmsford's administration, indenture would continue for several years, but public opinion would not allow its continuation or even the creation of a new system of assisted emigration. Not even a goodwill mission from Fiji towards the end of the period would change India's minds. Almost mythically, the final 'nail in the coffin' would be the discovery of a Fiji governmental report that blatantly acknowledged the existence of

[99] "INDENTURED LABOUR—Mr. Polak," *The Tribune* (Lahore, India), January 26 1917, 2.
[100] This was mentioned on page 24 of the thesis.
[101] Gokhale, "PROHIBITON OF INDENTURED LABOUR," 368.
[102] "INDENTURED LABOUR—Mr. Polak," *The Tribune* (Lahore, India), January 26 1917, 2.

prostitution in Fiji. Andrews would show this report to the Indian Viceroy Lord Chelmsford, who agreed to actually enact legislation that would end indenture.[103]

Fiji

The politicians of Fiji were almost entirely against the abolition of indenture. Fiji would repeatedly speak out against the exposés of indenture. Officials would repeatedly condemn the accusations of Burton, Andrews, Garnham and others as unfair and unindicative of the actual conditions in Fiji.[104] Members of the government and the planter's association called upon the favorable words of the McNeil report to debunk accusations.[105] The Fiji legislature would bring up the economic benefits of indenture for both Fiji and India, even publishing a report for the Indian Legislature in 1919 consisting of examples of specific indentured laborers that had prospered in Fiji.[106] The Fiji government would be criticized for bowing to the wishes of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, the consumer of the vast majority of indentured labor and a powerful lobbyist in the legislature. C. F. Andrews would later accuse the Fiji Legislature of being controlled by the C. S. R.[107] When the promise of indenture's abolition was made in 1916, many in India accused the Fiji government of being the main cause of the delay.[108] The fierce protection of indenture by the Fijian government was noted in India,

[103] Chaturvedi and Sykes, Charles Freer Andrews, 123.
[104] The view of the Fiji government on these reports and their specific responses to them will be addressed in the chapters regarding Christian literature in this thesis.
[105] This is mentioned on page 48 of the thesis.
[106] "Examples of Indian Prosperity," November 13, 1919, PJ/6-1636, Indian Office Records, British Library.
[107] See the section on Andrew's *Memorandum on Emigration to Fiji by Rev. C. F. Andrews* in Chapter 1.
[108] Bhartiya Hridaya, "IDENTURED INDIANS IN FIJI," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India) October 27, 1919, 8.

with some claiming that it was because it was the "Indian coolie who saved Fiji from the verge of ruin" in the early days of the colony.[109]

Upon the realization that indenture was inevitably ending, Fiji decided to send a goodwill mission to India headed by the Bishop of Polynesia of India to convince the government of India to continue some form of assisted emigration. The mission, however, was received with hostility, as the majority of Indians were against indenture by that point. Cecil Rodwell, the governor of Fiji, would in fact accept the motion to abolish indenture because "abolition might immediately induce a favorable attitude" towards assisted emigration in India.[110] This, of course, did not occur and indenture would end on January 1, 1920. The government's fierce opposition to ending indenture in Fiji would later lead to tensions between the government and its Indian citizens.

[109] Bhartiya Hridaya, "IDENTURED INDIANS IN FIJI," 8.
[110] Telegram from the Governor of Fiji to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, November 12, 1919, CO 83/146-64752, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.

Chapter 1

Influential Christian Literature

C. F. Andrews

Indian indentured laborers in Fiji had little influence. Most were uneducated, poor and far from their homes. The government of Fiji at the time was dominated by two factions; the Europeans and the native Fijians. In 1904 the existing Legislative Council was increased from two seats to ten official members, six elected European representatives and two representatives nominated by the Fijian Council of Chiefs.[111] This, of course, excluded the significant Indian population. The corruption and exploitation of the indenture system that had already existed was thus kept quiet for even longer than it had been. It took the influence and advocacy of outsiders to get the recognition and publicity needed to end indenture.

There were arguably three books that significantly documented and publicized the plight of the Indo-Fijians in the early years of the fight against indenture: J. W. Burton's *The Fiji of To-day,* Totaram Sanadhya's *My Twenty-One Years in the Fiji Islands,* and C. F. Andrews' *A Report on Indentured Labour in Fiji.*

My Twenty-One Years was obviously written by a Hindu, Hinduism being the primary religion of the Indo-Fijians. The other two books were written by Christians, J.

[111] Lal, *Broken Waves,* 36.

W. Burton being a Wesleyan Methodist missionary in Fiji and C. F. Andrews being a priest serving the Church of England in India. C. F. Andrews, in addition to his initial report, took a second voyage to Fiji after the first 1916 cancelation of indenture due to the delays that officials and planters were creating in Fiji. As such, this first chapter will be devoted to Andrews. The second chapter will deal with Burton's report and the additional report of Australian missionary Florence Garnham regarding the moral conditions of the indentured laborers. Both chapters will look at how Christian moralities and sensibilities effected their contents and shaped their depictions of indenture and their calls for its abolition. Christian morals called them to action, colored their arguments and influenced their calls for change. These writings will thus show how the morality of Christianity was pivotal in the battle for the end of indenture.

Report on Indentured Labour in Fiji

Introduction to C. F. Andrews

Charles Freer Andrews, "Gandhi's emissary"[112], was a famous man in his own right, but "of the many Indian causes espoused by (him), the abolition of the indentured labour system was possibly his greatest achievement."[113] Beginning his career as a chaplain and rowing coach at Cambridge, he decided to go to India when Basil Wescott, an Indian minister, died of cholera.[114] He worked at St. Stephen's college in New Delhi from 1904 to 1907 and these experiences "turned him . . .into a passionate prophet of

[112] Weir, "An Accidental Biographer?" in *Pacific Lives*, 216.
[113] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 177.
[114] Chaturvedi & Sykes, *Charles Freer Andrews,* 33.

racial equality."[115] He met with Gandhi in 1914 and began spending time with him and other Indian religious and political leaders of the time.[116] The death of his mother in 1914 came with grief, but also remembrance of his mother's desire for him to protect Indians, especially Indian women. He said this about the subject;

> I can see now what a unique part my dearest mother's love and devotion played in quickening my love for India herself. I was so constantly being reminded of all that I saw and read and learned about Indian motherhood by what I know of my own mother . . . Her spirit will shine out at me through Indian eyes and Indian mother's faces.[117]

He began flirting with Indian spirituality by talking with Gandhi and his friends. Because of this, fellow Indian Christians began pressing him to make a confession of faith. He responded with the statement, "If my deeds are not Christian, no words will make me so."[118] Andrews would later recite the Pauline confession of faith in South Africa, confirming his faith in Christ. His fascination and appreciation for other religions, however, did not die. Later writing would reveal Andrews continuingly flirting with and musing on the morals of many other religions, including the "freedom and brotherhood" of Islam and the "pure-hearted compassion" of Buddhism.[119]

In 1912, obtained both *The Fiji of To-day* and *My Twenty-One Years in Fiji* and subsequently took up the Indian politician G. K. Gokhale's 1910 call to end indenture. Andrews, in fact, thought it his commission from God to end indenture. According to Andrews, he saw a vision that proved this, describing it in the poem "The Indentured

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[115] Chaturvedi & Sykes, *Charles Freer Andrews,* 41.
[116] Ibid., 95.
[117] Ibid., 97.
[118] Ibid., 104.
[119] *The Testimony of C. F. Andrews,* (Madras, India: The Christian Literature Society), 1974, 253.

Coolie." In the poem, a tortured Indian coolie morphed into the face of Jesus, urging Andrews with his gaze to help the laborer.[120] So, in 1915, he and his friend W. W. Pearson went on an expedition to Fiji, financed by the Anti-Indentured Labour League of Calcutta. This organization was one of many anti-indenture leagues arising at the time. They visited important emigration depots on the way and, after an excursion to Melbourne and Sydney, they landed in Fiji on November 1915. [121]

Description of *Report on Indenture Labour in Fiji*[122]

Arkatis

Andrews relayed a long list of people who had been wronged by recruiters in the emigration depots (called Arkatis), a story told by "80 per cent of those who were indentured in India."[123] He told of kidnappings, fraud, and tales of deception involving caste impersonation. This caste impersonation consisted mainly of dressing up as Brahmins in order to gain the trust of low caste Indians. He also claimed that the arkatis were lying about the type of work that laborers were doing.[124] It was becoming so bad that "the villagers (had) in some districts actually banded themselves together against" the arkatis.[125] He focused extensively on Arkatis because of his preoccupation with exploitation and his love of fair play.

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[120] *The Testimony of C. F. Andrews*, 248.
[121] Chaturvedi & Sykes, *Charles Freer Andrews,* 115.
[122] In this section, I will look at some of the themes and preoccupations of Andrew's report. The main themes center around the exploitation of the Indian and the degradation of their morals in the lines.
[123] Andrews, *Report on Indentured Labour in Fiji,* 5.
[124] Ibid., 11-16.
[125] Ibid., 7.

Unfair Tasking

According to government mandate and the contract the Indians had to sign, a day of labor was judged according to a "task," or the amount of work that could be done in six hours. As it turned out, though, many laborers started work at 5:00 AM and ended at 3:00 PM, or roughly 10 hours of intensive work in the blistering Fiji sun.[126] Indians were given an outlet for protest through the intervention of Immigrant inspectors. These inspectors, however, only came once every six months and were difficult to speak to. On top of this, protests were outlawed by Governor Thurston in the early 1880's.[127]

Andrews, on this subject, told individual stories of people that were tricked by recruiters into believing that there would be less work in Fiji than there actually was. He told the story of a crying boy who begs for help after explaining that he came to Fiji for garden labor, not plantation labor. He told another story of a laborer in a sugar mill who was forced to work 12 hour shifts despite his initial contract. [128] Finally, he told of two young Telugus who, though they worked until noon in India, were forced to work until 5 or 6 PM every day in Fiji.[129] Though all these stories, he painted a picture of plantations unjustly taking advantage of these powerless Indians. This follows from his preoccupation with exposing the exploitative nature of indenture.

Marriage Legality

Andrews spoke of the system of "marit," whereby a couple would go to the immigration office and pay a fee in order to register themselves as a couple. The damage from this system, he stated, came from the "neglect of the State authorities to give any

[126] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 109.
[127] Ibid., 108.
[128] Andrews, *Report on Indentured Labour in Fiji,* 14.
[129] Ibid., 16. Telugu is an Indian language.

sanction at all to Hindu, Mahomedan and Indian Christian religious marriages."[130] He offered an extensive sample of letters detailing an instance where a woman left her Hindu husband for a "marit" husband, taking much of her old husband's wealth with her.[131] This system, he argued, was exploitative and unjust, and degrading towards the Indians' religion.

Moral Degradation

Andrews had worked in "conditions such as [those of the Indo-Fijians], yet what [he] met with in Fiji was far worse than [he] had ever anticipated."[132] He was most shocked and worried, not about the labor or health conditions, but about the moral decay of the Indians, what he called "a strange unaccountable epidemic of vice."[133] Far away from the rigid social systems of India, these young laborers were losing the moral and religious adherence that they had possessed in their homeland. Andrews specifically connects this moral degradation with the loss of religion amongst the laborers. He put it plainly-

> The Hindu in the coolie 'lines,' having no semblance, even, of a separate home of her own, which she can cherish, and divorced from all her old home ties, has abandoned religion itself. . . The outward life, which the Hindu women in the 'lines' lead in Fiji, appear(ed) to be without love and without worship, --a sordid round of mean and joyless occupations.[134]

Andrews also blamed the loss of morality on the gender ratio amongst the Indians and claimed, "the disproportion rises as high as one woman to four, or even to five, men."[135] He commented further, "We heard of one estate where the overseer made

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[130] Andrews, *Report on Indentured Labour in Fiji,* 35.
[131] Ibid., 36-38.
[132] Ibid., 30.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid., 39.
[135] Ibid., 29.

the regular practice, in order to keep peace in the 'lines', of allotting so many men to each single woman. This amounted to regulated prostitution." He called this a "moral evil" and went on to explain how this deeply affected the morals of the Indian people.[136]

Other Important Themes

In addition to these topics, Andrews addressed things like the conditions of the emigration ships, where castes were forced to mix and religious vegetarians were forced to eat things cooked in animal fat.[137] He told of the high rate of suicide and crime, with the suicide rate 20 times that of India and the murder rate 80 times greater than India's. This appeared at first like a ludicrous accusation, but Andrews backed it up with numbers. He claimed there was one murder for every 250,000 in Madras in India, while there was one conviction for every 3,000 living in Fiji. This added up to 80 times the murder rate in Fiji and alarmed those who read the report. The murders, he claimed, were mostly due to conflicts over women because of the disproportionate number of men.[138] He focused on education briefly, lamenting the lack of government assistance. He recognized the help of the mission schools in educating the Indians, but called for a hybrid system where teachers of all religions were included.[139]

Andrews' primary goal in traveling to Fiji and writing his report followed a common theme in his life; the call for action. In trying to honor the memory of the recently deceased G. K. Gokhale (the man who first called for the end of indenture in the Central Legislative Assembly), Andrews attempted to solicit governmental action. After explaining the system of Hinduism and the customs of the Indians more clearly to the

[136] Andrews, *Report on Indentured Labour in Fiji,* 30.
[137] Ibid., 28.
[138] Ibid., 32.
[139] Ibid., 50.

governor of Fiji in the final pages of his report, he gave a list of suggested improvements.[140] His first suggestion was to stop all recruiting. In its place, he advocated the establishment of system of free labor where people worked in Fiji on two year agricultural contracts. He also suggested taking away the penal clauses associated with the tasking system. [141] He approved of what the CSR Company had already been doing with free Indians and called the CSR Company to assist with the creation of structured Indian settlements.[142]

Ever the moralist, Andrews also had suggestions for "the recovery of marriage and the family life."[143] He called for more women to be recruited, a common complaint amongst Indians, and continued to suggest that only families should be recruited for the new system. To further sanctify marriage, he urged that divorce be outlawed so as not to "introduce laxity where strictness is required."[144] Finally, he called Governor Ernest Sweet Escott of Fiji to fund the emigration of strong Indian leaders from the mainland in order to facilitate community restructuring.[145]

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[140] Chaturvedi & Sykes, *Charles Freer Andrews,* 112.
[141] Andrews, "A Paper Written for the Acting Governor in Fiji" in *Report on Indentured Labour,* 1. Indians could be tried in court and fined if they were not able to complete their task in the allotted time. Sanadhya talked extensively about this in his book.
[142] Andrews, "A Paper Written for the Acting Governor in Fiji" in *Report on Indentured Labour,* 8. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company had been buying the sugar off of free Indian farmers, gradually moving from centralized farms to a buyer of independently grown sugar.
[143] Ibid., 13.
[144] Ibid., 8.
[145] Ibid., 13.

The Christianity of *Report on Indentured Labour in Fiji*

C. F. Andrews, a prominent minster and Christian in India, demonstrated strong Christian ideologies in this book, both through its preoccupations and calls to action. His Christianity, rather than being strict, was more liberal in its nature.

His first major preoccupation was his focus on morality and religion in Fiji. He consistently lamented the loss of morals among the Indians due to both the unfaithful women and the rising violence in the Indian communities. This loss of morals according to Andrews was due to the breakdown of Indian marriages. The lack of women led to infidelity and violence between Indians and between laborers and overseers. This emphasis on both moralities and marriages is distinctly Christian, especially for that time period.

Andrews' preoccupation with the sanctity of marriage was almost inextricably linked to his view of Christ' will for society. In discussing Indian society in a different writing, Andrews said;

> If we turn to present conditions in India, in the light of this teaching of Christ, there appears to very much indeed that is altogether encouraging in the outlook. . . . As far as I have been able to read the facts of history, the salt of Indian society, which has not lost its savour hitherto . . . has been the sacramental ideal of marriage, and the religious fulfilment of domestic life which this marriage sanctity has always involved. [146]

Marriage for Andrews, it seemed, was linked to the will of Christ for society, even if the marriage was not a Christian one.

This immorality, he argued most of all, was due to the loss of religion. He spoke of "the Hindu woman" who, forced far from home, "abandoned religion itself." Andrews

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[146] *The Tesitmony of C. F. Andrews,* 257. The reference to salt is from Matthew 5 in Jesus' sermon on the mount. 'Salt' here means the essence of the Indian society.

commented, "The outward life, which the Hindu women in the 'lines' lead in Fiji appears to be without love and without worship,—a sordid round of mean and joyless occupations." [147] For a religious man like Andrews, this loss was deeply disturbing. Religion set up a structure for life, gave purpose and meaning to one's actions, and led to constructive behavior. The liberal Christianity seen in Andrews, influenced by men like Gandhi, led him to desire a return to religion, even if that religion was not strict Christianity. The community that grew out of this seemed beneficial to him. His opinion on this was summed up in the statement, "Whatever may help to bring back religion will help to bring back morals also."[148]

His calls to action in the final pages were also distinct in their Christian application. His suggestions seemed uniquely preoccupied with building up the community. He saw the benefits of a religious core to bring a village or town together and increase overall morality. Andrews seemed concerned with creating a community regardless of the religion associated with it. His concern with the sanctity of marriage and sexual morality was deeply Christian, this being a particularly strong conviction of the church at the time.

Responses to *Report on Indentured Labour in Fiji*

The obvious immediate effect of this book was its significant contribution to the legal dissolution of indenture. On March 20, 1916, Lord Hardinge accepted a motion in the Imperial Legislative Council to abolish indenture, which promised to act "in due

[147] Andrews, *Report on Indentured Labour in Fiji,* 39.
[148] Ibid., 54.

course."[149] The Viceroy's decision seemed to be heavily influenced by Andrews' report. In his speech, Hardinge mentioned the influence of a recent slew of "damning facts which so far as [he was aware had] not been elicited by any previous inquiry."[150] Andrews' report was not specifically mentioned, but the timing and proliferation of Andrew's report left little doubt that his were the 'damning facts.'

The CSR Company agreed to obey the Indian government, but was rumored to have secretly worked with the Fiji government to secure at least five more years of indenture. The Indian newspaper the *Tribune* speculated upon this, saying that "If it [was] true that the home authorities [had] promised the Fiji planters that the system would be continued for another five years, they [had] shown an utter disregard for the feeling of Indians and their welfare."[151] Andrews began speaking in India again and went back to Fiji in 1917. He campaigned tirelessly until indenture was finally ended on January 1, 1920. [152] The government did not adopt Andrew's suggestion for family-based, government assisted free labor, but the report did much to sway public and government opinion in India and Britain.

Conclusions Regarding *Report on Indentured Labour in Fiji*

Andrews was one of the most important figures in the abolition of indenture. He fought tirelessly in the name of God to free the oppressed and fight injustice. His report

[149] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 181.
[150] "ABOLITION OF INDENTURED LABOUR—THE VICEROY'S SPEECH," *The Tribune* (Lahore, India). March 22, 1916, 3.
[151] "Indentured Labour. LETTER FROM MR. ANDREWS. Press Comments," *The Allahabad Leader,* January 17, 1917, 2.
[152] Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* 189.

did much to illuminate the corruption and exploitation of the indenture system and his actions and lectures furthered the cause.

The report, though possessing a much less religious tone than *The Fiji of To-day,* was nonetheless remarkably Christian in its preoccupations.[153] He focused disproportionately on the moral decay of the Indians and the sexual immorality of the lines. Though these could be ascribed to many religions, Andrews' focus was due to his deep, if unique, adherence to Christian ideology. His study of Hinduism and Indian thought, as well as his partnerships with Indian leaders, allowed him to identify with the Indians in Fiji fight hard for them.

His actions and calls to action also represented a distinctly late 19th century Christianity. He used his connections and politics to achieve justice and right wrongs all over the world. His focus, though, was on the people over everything else, a sentiment he made clear in his report;

> We made clear to the Government and the planters, that we were in no way in a position to enter into any political negotiations. We had come out for humanitarian, not for political, reasons.[154]

Andrews would go on to accomplish much more in his life, but he will always be remembered in Fiji as a tireless crusader for the indentured laborer.

Andrew's Second Crusade

March 21, 1916 was a day of celebration for opponents of indenture. It was on this day that Lord Hardinge, viceroy of India, supported the resolution of non-official

[153] *The Fiji of To-day* will be discussed in the next chapter.
[154] Andrews, "A Paper Written for the Acting Governor in Fiji" in *Report on Indentured Labour,* 10.

legislator Pandit Malaviya before the Indian Legislative Council to end Indian indentured labor. India's *The Times* said the next day, "The Government had alluded to the feeling against the system, which had intensified yearly. The Secretary of State had agreed to the policy of total abolition, but the [then] current system of recruiting [had to] be maintained until the new conditions had been worked out . . ."[155] This period of maintaining, in fact, was planned to last for 5 years due to an effort by Fijian planters and officials.[156] In short, the fight for the end of indenture was not over. Andrews continued to lead the fight against indenture even after this time. Immediately, Andrews attended speeches, meetings and lectures against indenture across India. One such meeting was at Allahabad, where Andrews and H. S. L Polak, Gandhi's South African associate, denounced indenture before a cheering crowd.[157]

His next action was a return voyage to Fiji on April 30, 1917.[158] This was because Andrews became aware of the possible continuation of indenture due to Fiji planter intervention. According to Andrews, "shiploads of new Indian labourers, men and women, [were] being sent to Fiji." Thus, the "proportion of 3 men to one woman" led to a continuation of the system of "legalized prostitution" that he claimed it brought.[159] Andrews was not satisfied with the future promise of the abolition of indenture. Thus, he sought in the name of God to end it as soon as he could.

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[155] "Indian Indentured Labour- Abolition Decided Upon- Rejoicings in India," March 22, 1916. *India Times,* L/PJ-6-1254, Indian Office Records, British Library.
[156] Meyer, *Indians in Fiji,* 21.
[157] "INDENTURED LABOUR. Great Demonstration at Allahabad," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), January 22, 1917, 4.
[158] C. F. Andrews, "Memorandum on Emigration to Fiji by Rev. C. F. Andrews," March 15, 1918, CO 323/778-57, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.
[159] "Indentured Indian Labour," *The Allahabad Leader,* January 20, 1917, 6.

Memorandum on Emigration to Fiji by Rev. C. F. Andrews

Andrews' 1917 trip yielded another influential report, his *Memorandum on Emigration to Fiji by Rev. C. F. Andrews* (Hereafter called *Memorandum*), a piece of literature that further prompted the end of indenture in Fiji. Traveling this time without his trusted companion Rev. Pearson, Andrews went to Fiji with the full intention of exposing and thereby ending the evils of indenture. R. M. Booth, the Agent General of Immigration in India, claimed that Andrews came to Fiji with not just a mindset against indenture, but against any system of emigration at all.[160] This mindset was further displayed the next year with the publication of his opposition to the outcome of the 1918 Indian Immigration conference, where he railed against any form of assisted emigration to Fiji at all.[161] With this mindset, Andrews wrote a scathing report that would significantly affect the final years of indenture and hasten its end.

Contents of *Memorandum*

Andrews first listed his reasons for taking his second trip to Fiji. He cited the growing opinion against indenture among the Indian populace and legislature as his primary reason. Not only did unofficial members of the Indian Legislative Council call for the immediate end of indenture without a grace period, but also the All-India Ladies' Deputation was working to raise awareness of marriage infidelity in Fiji. Even the

[160] R. M. Booth, "Memorandum on a Report Written by Mr. C. F. Andrews in October, 1917," Feb. 27, 1918, CO 83/138-47582, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.
[161] G. Grindle, "Memo by Rev. C. F. Andrews on the proposals of the Interdepartmental Conference on Emigration," March 15, 1918, CO-83-778-57, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.

common people, Andrews claimed, were singing songs for the benefit of "warning [their fellow villagers] against the wiles of the recruiters."[162] These sentiments against indenture came at a time when, though it was officially abolished, indenture was continuing. Confident, Andrews claimed to an Australian member of the House of Representatives that, due to the involvement of the Sydney-based CSR Company in Fiji, India would refuse to do any business with Australia within five years unless indenture did not end.[163]

Andrews spent a large part of *Memorandum* on the subjects he loved to tackle—the gender ratio and the sanctity of religious marriage. His unique focus this time, though, was more on what he called the "trafficking" of young women.[164] He claimed that men were cohabiting with "tiny girls of 9 or 10" due to the lack of brides. [165] The then-current marriage laws allowed fathers to pass their daughters from husband to husband. He claimed to have seen "with his own eyes" government correspondence that froze the gender ratio at 33 women to 100 Indian men, implicating the government in this moral travesty.[166] A new claim from Andrews said that separate quarters for married couples in the plantation lines were not being built despite the "extra million pounds in (the) pockets" of the Fiji planters due to war-time price booms.[167] Gone were his assurances that the Fijian government was trying its best to remedy the situation.

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[162] Andrews, "Memorandum", 2.
[163] Acting Governor Eyre Hutson, "Forwards copies of remarks made by Mr. Finlayson, M. P. in the Australian House of Representatives, regarding the conditions of employment of labourers by the C. S. R. Co Fiji," August 1, 1918, CO 84/143-48227, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives. While many Indian citizens felt this way, this was not a sentiment of the Indian government.
[164] By trafficking here, I mean the exchange of people for monetary gain. Young girls were being sold by their parents as brides for cash.
[165] Andrews, "Memorandum," 4.
[166] Ibid., 4.
[167] Ibid., 6.

The assurances were replaced with accusations and allegations. This new tactic would garner many enemies for Andrews in the coming years.

In addition to his views on marriage sanctity and his reliance on Indian public opinion, Andrews called for specific reforms he called "remedial measures."[168] His first remedial measure was the abolition of the indenture system and the immediate abolition of all indentured workers. Regarding the gender ratio and marriage, he had many solutions. Other than his primary treatment of "bringing out . . . more women to Fiji," Andrews proposed free return passages to India for single men to marry. He called for further reform regarding Fiji's marriage ordinance, including an increase in the number of marriage officiates and an increase in the marriage age for girls. On the plantations, he called for quarters for married couples and an end to the overseeing of women's labor groups by young, unmarried Australian men. Regarding gender, Andrews' final recommendation was the installation of women matrons in the Indian hospitals. Andrews proceeded to accuse Fiji of not following through with the commutation of Indian indentured laborers, whereby Indians could pay off their indenture period with a six-month notice. Andrews finally called Fiji to properly educate Indo-Fijian children, but with an emphasis on Indian-centered education over English, universal education. To use the "universal system of education," Andrews argued, "would tend to destroy everywhere the use of the mother tongue found among Indian children."[169]

[168] Andrews, "Memorandum," 19. All facts regarding Andrews' remedial measures will be taken from "Memorandum," pages 19 to 20.
[169] Ibid., 21.

Conclusions regarding *Memorandum*

Andrews, who considered it his mission from God to end indenture if Fiji, felt it his duty to continue fighting delays created by the planters and officials of Fiji. His 1917 report brought a more focused and accusatory tone than his 1916 report. In it, he focused on many of the same issues such as the gender ratio and education but focused more on the inability of the government to stop the rampant corruption and exploitation brought on by the system of indenture. Andrews would later clarify and intensify these accusations in his 1919 summative report, where he said that the Fiji government was too weak to fight off the wishes of the C. S. R. Given this weakness, Andrews argued, Fiji should have been given over to the jurisdiction of Australia or New Zealand rather than retain a separate colonial government.[170] These stronger sentiments stand side by side with Andrews' characteristic Liberal Christian sentiments—these being his preoccupations with marriage sanctity, exploitation (of adults and children) and the insistence of the Indian's value as humans. This report influenced many people's actions, both for and against the measures that Andrews called for.

Responses to *Memorandum*

While there were many *general* responses to the strong accusations of Andrews, there were two *specific* formal responses to Andrews' 1917 report that stood out; one from the Indian Agent General of Immigration and one from the Fiji Planters' Association. In a response from R. H. Booth, the Agent General, Booth broke apart

[170] C. F. Andrews, *Fiji indentured labour,* Pamphlets, V144, Indian Office Records, The British Library, 11.

Andrews' arguments piece by piece. Significant accusations and refutations included Andrews' involvement with the "Indian Home Rule movement," his use of hyperbole, his false accusations about the gender ratio and his responses to the measures proposed. Booth accused Andrews of being a supporter of the Indian Home rule movement, or the push for Indian self-governance.[171] Being a close friend of Gandhi and Booth's accusation was probably made to delegitimize Andrews in the eyes of British officials. Booth further attacked Andrews' opinions on education, that the teaching of Indian children in vernacular was a "a mere pretence" for the goals of the Home Rule movement.[172] Booth went on to attack Andrews' tone and use of "hyperbolism" and the "highfalutin language in which the Indians habitually write."[173] Booth's statement discussed Andrews' bold statements, and well as his association with the Indians and the Indian rights movement. Here, Booth tried to tie Andrews in with his Indian colleagues, even saying that the report was written "to appeal to them."[174] By connecting the two groups, Booth attempted to further denigrate his witness in the eyes of the English.

This particular accusation tinged with hints of racism. Booth relished the opportunity to point out that the government records freezing the gender ratio were from 1887, far too early to have any significance for the 1910s.[175] This allegation against Andrews was an attempt by Booth to delegitimize Andrews and taint his motives and methods regarding his campaign against indenture. Finally, Booth attacked the remedial

[171] Booth, "Memorandum on a Report Written by Mr. C. F. Andrews in October, 1917," 351.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid., 353.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Fiji Legislative Council, "Indian Immigrants (Percentage of Female to Male Immigrants)", Enclosure No. II in Fiji Dispatch No. 56 of the 27th February 1918, CO 83/138-47582, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.

measures posed by Andrews by refuting them systematically and explaining the measures already taken by the government regarding the issue.[176] Immigration to Fiji was a large part of Booth's job, and he responded in a strong way to defend his department's actions.

The second major response was from the Planters' Association of Fiji.[177] In the response, they defended many of their actions and provided explanations for their failures. They claimed first that Andrews' report was "designed by people with a particular motive."[178] In other words, they called Andrews a biased observer. They claimed that the conditions he spoke of existed many years ago and that Fiji had become a much happier place. The Planters claimed most fervently that Andrews was ignoring the material prosperity of the Indians in Fiji. J. L. Hunt, the president of the association, specifically mentioned the efforts of the Planters to comply with the reforms requested, saying, "The government of Fiji is honestly endeavoring to meet the wishes of the Indian Government and that the planters and employers of labour generally are loyally following the lead of the Government here."[179]

Both responses showed the influence of Andrews' report. Booth used racial associations to tarnish Andrews' name. The Planters' Association tried to justify themselves and push back against his accusations. The Planters, in fact, asked fervently why Andrews' report was being considered over the 1914 report by Lal and McNiell.[180]

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[176] Booth, "Memorandum on a Report Written by Mr. C. F. Andrews in October, 1917," 361-363.
[177] This was the association that represented the sugar planters of Fiji. Members included both freelance planters and those that worked for larger sugar corporations like the CSR.
[178] Planters' Association, "Fiji and Indians; Reply to Mr. C. F. Andrews," CO 83/138-47582, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives. All facts regarding the Planters' response will come from this document.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid.

Questions regarding Andrews' disproportionate impact were asked by many people, specifically Andrews' critics. Andrews spoke to influential legislators and politicians. In addition to affecting the opinion of Hardinge, Andrews changed the mind of politicians in India and Australia.[181] This was evident in a memorandum from Fiji Governor C. H. Rodwell in late 1919 outlining the official end of indenture. In it, Rodwell accused the Indian politicians of being entirely influenced by Andrews' reports regarding their opinions of indenture. Rodwell urged for focus on the report of McNiell and Lal, an investigation that disclosed "quite a different state of affairs to that described by Mr. Andrews."[182] In Australia, Andrews' statements and remarks piqued the ire of representatives like Mr. Finlayson, who compared the labor abuses in Fiji to the kanaka labor abuses previously seen in Queensland, saying, "An even worse state of affairs (than the kanakas in Queensland) is found in Fiji. We used to shudder at reading of the Congo atrocities inflicted on fellow British subjects, yet here, by our own doors, we seem helpless to interfere.[183]

Andrews' reports also garnered the ire of the Fiji government. Rodwell, the governor in 1919, was described in official correspondence as being "very angry with Mr. Andrews."[184] The governor wrote a scathing response in the *Fiji Times* accusing Andrews of "very gross exaggeration."[185] The administration in Fiji seemed to generally

[181] See introduction to section "Andrew's 1917 Fiji Visit and Beyond."
[182] Memorandum from Gov. Rodwell to Viscount Milner, August 14, 1919, CO 83/246-59905, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.
[183] Acting Governor Eyre Hutson, "Forwards copies of remarks made by Mr. Finlayson . . ." Kanaka laborers here meant the Melanesian laborers that were conscripted and brought to Australia through a similar system to that of Indians. In referencing the Congo, he is discussing the reign of King Leopold II over the Congo Free State, where the natives were enslaved and often maimed or killed. A large popular movement rose in protest of all that went on until 1908, when King Leopold abdicated the Congo to Belgium.
[184] "Indian Labour conditions in Fiji," January 14, 1919, CO 83/145-2891, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.
[185] Ibid.

distrust and discredit Andrews and chafe at the amount of work that he was able to accomplish singlehandedly.

In India, the additional reports of C. F. Andrews were being proliferated widely. This caused them to be addressed by the Indian Central Legislature. Sir George Barnes, an official member of the legislature, mentioned all of Andrews' suggestions from his 1917 *Memorandum* and claimed that some of these suggestions, including the new marriage laws, were being implemented. He assured the people of India that Andrews was being considered and that indenture was on its way out. Barnes, however, was a fierce proponent of the continuation of assisted emigration, which was not popular in India. In his speech, he pushed back against the request of non-official legistlaor Mohan Malaviya for immediate abolition. In mentioning Andrews, he almost seemed to be making a concession; "The hon. member has quoted Andrews and so have I."[186] He then went on to talk about the improvements that Andrews had seen in Fiji. Barnes thus tried to co-opt the public's trust of Andrews in order to legitimize his own argument. This was an example of the public's regard for Andrews' reports.

Andrews and Venereal Diseases

One of the final nails in the coffin for Indian support of indenture was Andrews' discovery of a medical report by Dr. Harper, District Medical Official of the Ba province of Fiji. This report contained a paragraph, that Harper had "meant to delete" linking the

[186] "Imperial Legislative Council. RESOLUTION ON INDENTURED LABOUR," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), September 14, 1918, 5.

rise of venereal diseases in Fiji to the gender ratio. The statement, which Andrews relayed immediately to politicians in India, was;

> When one indentured Indian woman has to serve three indentured men as well as various outsiders the result as regards syphilis and gonorrhea cannot be in doubt.[187]

Andrews now had very tangible, government-acknowledged proof of the negative effects of the gender ratio in Fiji. Dr. Harper was severely criticized for the mistake of not deleting it, but the damage was already done. Andrews took his evidence to India and revealed it to several Indian politicians along with his previous reports on indenture.

Chelmsford, the Viceroy after Lord Hardinge, sent correspondence to Sweet-Escott, the governor of Fiji at the time, that related a recent visit from Andrews.[188] The visit consisted of an explanation from Andrews of the conditions of indentured labor in Fiji and, with the information from Dr. Harper's report in mind, Chelmsford called for change. He said specifically, "The statement of facts published in Council Paper No. 54 to which Mr. Andrews draws specific attention seem to furnish a very sufficient justification for regarding the existing sate of things as demanding prompt remedial measures."[189] His list was a carbon copy of Andrews' 1917 recommendations. They consisted mostly of calls for marriage reform and privacy for women in hospitals and in their dwelling places.[190] A further telegram explained that Andrews' report was to be

[187] Extract from 1915 Report by Dr. Harper, "Indentured Labour in Fiji," October 7, 1918, CO 83/143-48366, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.
[188] Sweet-Escott replaced May as governor of Fiji in 1912 and stayed in office until 1918.
[189] Chelmsford to Bickham Sweet-Escott, April 13th, 1918, CO 83/143-48366, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.
[190] Ibid.

discussed in the Indian Legislative Council the following September.[191] Finally, in a particularly famous instance, Andrews brought Harper's report to Lord Montagu, the Secretary of State for India. Montagu was reportedly horrified at the news and promised to end indenture earlier than expected.[192] Andrews' report, combined with his discoveries regarding venereal diseases in Fiji, helped further a legislative push in India to end indenture as quickly as possible.

Conclusions regarding Andrews' work after 1917

Andrews' 1916 report was one the most significant contributors to the initial end of indentured labor in Fiji. While some might have stopped at this point, Andrews, having been "commissioned by God," fought to end indenture as soon as possible. The end of indenture continued to be delayed. The final cutoff point was November 1921, but Andrews fought to bring that date to January, 1 1920. [193] He served as an outside force looking in, not tainted by political affiliations or religious obligations to the largely complacent Fiji Methodist church. [194] He was able to use his political influence to fight what he saw as the degradation of the people he loved. Andrews' turn-of-the-century Liberal Christian mindset allowed him see Indo-Fijians as people to defend regardless of their religious leanings or the likelihood of their conversion. His faith influenced his every step , allowing him to fight selflessly in the name of God with few apparent ulterior

[191] Telegram from Indian Viceroy to Fiji Governor, October, 26, 1918, CO 83/143-48366, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.
[192] Chaturvedi and Sykes, *Charles Freer Andrews,* 123.
[193] Florence Garnham, *A Report on the Social and Moral Condition of Indians in Fiji,* (Sydney: The Kington Press, 1918), L/PJ-6-1570, India Office Records, British Library, 12.
[194] This will be further explained in the third chapter, which discusses the Church in Fiji.

motives. He influenced legislators in Fiji, though he was rebuffed and charged with "gross exaggeration" by everyone from the emigration officials to the governor. He influenced people in Australia, such as Garnham and Finlayson. Most importantly, he changed the mind of those in India, where he was a major catalyst for the negative public and official opinion of indenture. Many Indian politicians of the time were directly influenced by his reports and speeches. Out of all candidates, he arguably did the most to end indenture in Fiji. There was no doubt that he fulfilled the calling he received from God.

Chapter 2-

Further Christian Literature;

J. W. Burton and Florence Garnham

C. F. Andrews arguably did more to end indenture than any other politician or clergyman. Andrews, of course, was not the only significant Christian contributor to the cause. J. W. Burton, a Wesley Minister from Fiji, wrote one of the first exposés on the life of indentured laborers. The book was filled with harsh criticisms of the indenture system in Fiji and received harsh backlash both from the Fiji government and members of the Wesleyan church.[195] Garnham was a missionary from the London Missionary Society hired by the combined women's society of Australia to observe the moral degradation of the indentured laborers after the so-called 'end of indenture' in 1916.[196] Her words and accusations were almost harsher than Andrews and helped bring to light the continuing exploitation of Indians after 1916. Both of these authors had distinctly Christian viewpoints and preoccupations as both were part of religious organizations. What made them stand out was their outsider's perspective—Burton was a theological liberal ministering to a marginalized, largely unreceptive group of people in Fiji and Garnham came in as a woman missionary from Australia. These perspectives and positions allowed them to push past the church-sanctioned stigmas surrounding

[195] Governor Sir Francis Henry May to Mr. Secretary Lewis Lewis Vernon Harcourt, August 5, 1911, *Fiji; Original Correspondence- CO 83/102.* Great Britain, Public Records Office, Received from the University of California Los Angeles.

[196]Garnham, "Report on the Social and Moral Conditions of Fiji," 3.

government criticism and fight boldly for the Indians as people, not as potential converts.[197]

The Fiji of To-day

J. W. Burton, missionary to the Indians in Fiji, wrote a book in 1910 explaining "things as they are" in the Fiji Islands.[198] He spent a large portion of the book exploring the successes and failures of the Methodist church in Fiji among the Fijians, but the most famous (and controversial) section dealt with the indenture system. Rev. A. J. Small, the Chairman of the Fiji District of the Australasian Methodist Missionary Society, had this to say about Burton in the introduction of *The Fiji of To-day;*

> The author of *The Fiji of To-day* has aimed throughout at giving what appears to him a faithful representation of ' things as they are.' Facts, whatever their nature, are fearlessly stated ; problems are bravely faced and grappled with ; and logical conclusions are sought no matter whither they may lead.[199]

This was a bold statement from the head of the local church authority, and one that would lead him to receive much criticism in the future. The book was an unflinching and scathing look at the inequalities and injustices in the Fiji of that day. This book was circulated throughout India and brought much attention to the issue of indenture in the early 1910s.

It is important to note the book was written from a minster's perspective. Burton was a missionary to the Indians in Fiji, and this mindset prevails throughout the book.

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[197] The position of the Fiji Methodist church will be further discussed in a chapter devoted to the subject.
[198] Burton, *The Fiji of To-day,* 12.
[199] Ibid., 12-13.

Burton saw the Indians as both a threat to the Church and as a people to be pursued and saved.[200] His rhetoric was entrenched in Euro-centrism and, at times, was derisive towards the Indian people. Burton, however, wrote this book to fight injustice in the hopes that one day "even the subtle, intellectual Hindu and the haughty, aggressive Muhammadan [would] yield, at length, to the compulsion of the Cross."[201]

Burton's Description of the "Lines"[202]

Burton's description of indenture was a dismal one. "The chances are," Burton said, "that as a slave [an indentured laborer] would be both better housed and better fed than he [was under indenture]. The coolies themselves, for the most part, frankly call[ed] it narak (hell)!"[203] The lines, he said, were crowded, unsanitary, a "disgrace to civilization and a stain upon commerce."[204] The laborers were given unfair tasks and worked beyond what they could physically accomplish. This was why, he argued, indentured laborers tried "the edge of the cane-knife upon the skull of the English overseer."[205] By saying this, he alluded to the abnormally high murder rate among the Indians, especially the murders of English overseers by disgruntled laborers. In the lines, children were allowed to run wild and the Christian missionary had to fight to be able to teach them. He had this to say about their education;

> The companies were afraid that if education were given —particularly in English —the coolies would be spoilt as ' labour,' and that when a coolie became a Christian he would then hold absurd ideas about all men being brothers ! There

[200] Burton, *The Fiji of Today,* 8.
[201] Ibid., 9.
[202] The "lines" were the shacks were the indentured laborers were forced to live.
[203] Burton, *The Fiji of Today*, 271.
[204] Ibid., 272.
[205] Ibid.*,* 270.

> was no need, however, for the companies to be fearful, for the coolie has not manifested any visible enthusiasm either for English or Christianity.[206]

This quote, in particular, demonstrated both Burton's fervor for the rights of the Indians and his resignation at the church's lack of success with the Indians.[207] Burton would have been the catalyst for many conversions, but, as seen later in his book, Burton fought for the Indians without this expectation. Though his critiques were harsh, Burton did make a concession in the claim that the work provided by indenture helped the people of low caste gain morals.[208] This seemed good to Burton, who accused the labor recruiters in India of only recruiting those of "low caste or no caste at all."[209] He claimed that this work strengthened their moral character.

Throughout his report, Burton recounted several stories of injustices committed against Indians under the indenture system. He told the story of an educated lawyer from Calcutta who embezzled money from his company. His father, a minister, worked it out that he would receive a pardon for his action as long as he went to Fiji. At the time of Burton's interview, he was digging ditches and making extra spending money by writing letters for other indentured laborers. This educated man was beat by his overseer for speaking English.[210] This instance showed parallels to the old system of slavery. In another story, an accountant ran away from India after killing his wife and threatened suicide if he didn't get out of his indenture contract because of the hard work

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[206] Burton, *The Fiji of Today,* 273. "Companies" here refers to the sugar plantations that employed the indentured laborers.
[207] The church's apathy is discussed further in chapter 3.
[208] Burton, *The Fiji of Today,* 275.
[209] Ibid., 274.
[210] Ibid., 281.

and beatings.[211] Each account painted indenture as exploitative, violent and incredibly taxing on the Indians. Burton commented of indenture,

> Let it be said to the credit of the Immigration Department in Fiji that every care is taken, so far as possible, to prevent the oppression of the coolie. The system, however, is a barbarous one, and the best supervision cannot eliminate cruelty and injustice. Such a method of engaging labour may be necessary in order to carry out the enterprises of capital ; but there is something dehumanizing and degrading about the whole system. It is bad for the coolie; it is not good for the Englishman.[212]

Burton here did concede that the government at the time was trying its best to fight corruption in the system. He realized, however, that the system of indenture bred corruption as a rule. Burton thus called out the indenture system as exploitative, unjust and cruel.

The Christianity of *The Fiji of To-day*

J. W. Burton's work was Christian in its writing style, focus and call to action. The most obvious place where this style was evident was in the preface and the final chapter "The Silver Lining". He ended his introduction with the hope that the Indians would eventually come to know Christ. He called for men to "scorn delights and live laborious day, far from the applause of their fellows" in order to fight for the Indian's life and soul.[213] In his final chapter, late 19th century liberal Christian sensibilities came out in his statement;

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[211] Burton, *The Fiji of Today,* 284.
[212] Ibid., 285.
[213] Ibid., 9. In saying that he exhibits Liberal Christianity, I am referring to the movement in the late nineteenth century where people began looking critically at scripture with modern advances in science in mind. I am also

> Christianity does appeal to the Indian. Churchism may not—it is too much like his own jumble of superstitions and creeds. India will not follow us. The best we can hope is that she may learn to follow Christ. The Indian will not take our theology. He will reserve to himself the right to interpret the Scriptures according to his own temperament. After all, this is only what the Western peoples have demanded. We may despise the system of theology which will thus evolve ; we may smile at its mysticism bordering upon the verge of superstition ; we may anathematize his whole creed ; but that will matter very little to him. Christianity will satisfy his soul's needs, and he will not care for either our praise or blame.[214]

He here realized both the futility and importance of his mission to convert the Indian. In line with Christian tradition, he called for people to labor for the Indian's soul, though the laborers were scorned and even ignored for their efforts to do so. This attitude drew heavily on passages from scripture, like Matthew 20: 26-28, which states, "But is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."[215] Burton thus possessed an almost self-deprecating, resigned attitude towards his work—answering the call to "deny himself" and "lose his life" for the sake of Christ.[216] "The task before us is not so romantic as the old one," he said, "nor so attractive ; but it is *ours*, and *none other may share it*."[217]

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referring to the accompanying movement that called for social and political action by the church. Burton's liberal Christianity can seen in an early sermon of his— "it was not the belief that the heathen were falling into an endless hell which had impelled me to go forth, but rather the unhappy condition of people who, ignorant of the good news, were living without the happiness that Christ alone could give." It can also be seen in his lack of literal biblical interpretation and his belief that the Gospel was good news for social and economic as well as spiritual wellbeing. The previous quotes and facts can be found in the short biography in chapter 16 of *Telling Pacific Lives* (Chritine Weir, "An Accidental Biographer? On Encountering, Yet Again, the Ideas and Actions of J. W. Burton," in *Telling Pacific Lives; Prisims of Progress,* Ed. BriJ Lal & Vicki Luker, (Canberra, Australia: ANU E Press, 2008).

[214] Burton, *The Fiji of Today,* 361.

[215] Matthew 20:26-28 (NASB)

[216] Matthew 16:24-26 (NASB)

[217] Burton, *The Fiji of Today*, 363.

Responses to *The Fiji of Today*

The Fiji of Today garnered many responses and was spread widely around both Fiji and India. Andrews, in a letter to Burton, said,

> I do feel very strongly indeed that your book was the pioneer and did the pioneer work, and it is due to that books perhaps more than to any other single cause in the past that the whole indenture system was shown up in its proper light.[218]

Andrews cited this book and Sanadhya's *My Twenty-One Years* as two of his primary reasons for seeking the end of indenture. Sanadhya himself extensively cited Burton's book. He claimed that Burton was "a great unbiased writer," later recounting the story of Burton coming to his house and trying to convert him. Though he said the "Padre" had difficulty converting the Indians, he possessed much spiritual strength. [219]

The interesting thing about the initial responses of the Wesleyan church in Fiji to this book was the lack of adverse criticism. A. J. Small, the Chairman of the church in Fiji wrote a glowing introduction and the Methodist Missionary Society sent a copy to every Methodist minister in Australia. Due to the report's publicity, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company sent a complaint to the Fijian government, prompting Gov. Francis May to write a scathing rebuttal of Burton's claims to chairman A. J. Small. [220] A. J.

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[218] K. L. Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants,* (Melbourne; Oxford University Press, 1962), 178.
[219] Sanadhya, *My Twenty-One Years in the Fiji Islands,* 82.
[220] Weir, "An Accidental Biographer?" in *Pacific Lives,* 216.

Small would retract his endorsement of the book and the Fiji Methodist synod would later clarify that *The Fiji of To-day* was written without its consent.[221]

Gov. May, who claimed a "long standing friendship with some of [the] leading ministers" of the Wesleyan mission, wrote a heated letter attacking the claims of Burton. To call indenture "absolute slavery" like Burton does, Francis argued, was a misuse of words.[222] The indentured laborers were, as the Chief Medical officer for the indenture laborers said, "wholesome and healthy."[223] Wages were higher than those in India and, while space conditions in the indenture lines was crowded at first, legislation enacted in 1908 was requiring more floor space. Francis did concede that education for the Indians was relatively non-existent, but pointed to the Education commissions in 1909 for the possibility of change. Burton's famous line about the "abjectness and misery" of the lines, Francis argued, was gross libel against the Fiji government.[224] Francis went on to say that this account of indenture should not have been endorsed by the signature of the head of the Wesleyan Mission in Fiji. Burton, he concluded, was a "careless, prejudiced and untrustworthy critic."[225]

Burton's book was one of the first threats to the status quo in Fiji and subsequently, the governor appeared concerned by the possibility. In further correspondences, Sir C. Lucas told fellow official J. Andrews about the criticisms of both the Gov. Everard Im Thurn, governor of Fiji until 1910 and the Gov. Francis May, the

[221] *Fiji District Synod Annual Meeting Minutes 1908-1920,* 1908, PMB 1138, Reel 2, Digitized microfilm, Pacific Manuscript Bureau, 145.
[222] Governor Sir Franis Henry May, *Fiji; Original Correspondence.*
[223] Ibid.
[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid.

governor after 1910, against Burton. Subsequently, he urged him to ignore the book. Another official agreed by writing the statement; "Better not advertise the book."[226] It was, however, too late. Burton's writings had been spread, the voiceless Indians had been heard, and the end of indenture was brought closer.

Burton's book was spread throughout India and its claims were reiterated alongside Sanadhya' *My Twenty-One Years in the Fiji Islands* in Indian newspapers. An Indian Legislator quoted Burton's book in an attack on the system of indenture before the Central Legislature.[227] In 1915, there were rumors of Fiji coming under Australian control. *The Leader* posted an editorial about the evils of the indenture system, quoting Burton's description of an Australian overseer having his way with the Indian women under his command.[228] In another critique, a writer from the *The Indian Social Reformer* wrote to *The Leader* and quoted Burton in order to display indenture as akin to slavery.[229]

Burton's book would be later cited in arguments against indenture after 1916. Finlayson, the Australian representative that met with Andrews in 1918 and urged Fiji to fix the system, quoted Burton's dismal accounts of the conditions in indentured shacks and lodgings, using it as a spring board to call for improved conditions. Burton's report

[226] Treatment of Indian Indentured Labourers. & J. W. Burton's Allegations, August, 5, 1911, *Fiji; Original Correspondence- CO 83/102*. Great Britain, Public Records Office, Received from the University of California Los Angeles.
[227] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 39.
[228] Report on Fiji from the *Telegraph, The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), May, 25, 1915, 3.
[229] "Indentured Indian Labour for British Colonies," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), August 1, 1915, 8.

thus impacted popular opinion and legislation beyond the initial end of indenture in 1916.[230]

Conclusions regarding *The Fiji of To-day*

Burton's book was influential to the end of Indian indenture. It shed light on the system that had been consistently corrupt for decades and had exploited an entire group of people of the island of Fiji. It inspired others to work towards the end of indenture, including such men as Totaram Sanadhya and C. F. Andrews who would go on to be powerful forces in the fight against indenture. It encouraged the future report of Florence Garnham.[231] The book was also read widely in India and helped fuel the growing political movement to abolish indenture.[232] The book consistently called for the end of the exploitative system of indenture rather than its reformation. This chafed against the typical Wesleyan belief that "the whole system of Indenture [was] under Government control" and that "their life [in Fiji] must [have been] very much more tolerable than what they [had] been accustomed to in their own country."[233]

The Fiji of To-day was a book profoundly entrenched in liberal Christian principles. Burton endeavored to save the Indians economically and socially in addition to saving their souls. Being and outsider to the indenture system and well-educated and fairly influential, Burton was able to give a voice to the voiceless and help end indenture.

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[230] Acting Governor Eyre Hutson, "Forwards copies of remarks made by Mr. Finlayson, M. P. in the Australian House of Representatives, regarding the conditions of employment of labourers by the C. S. R. Co Fiji."
[231] She will be discussed later in the chapter.
[232] Weir, "An Accidental Biographer?" in *Pacific Lives*, 216.
[233] Ibid., 215.

He chafed against the then-prevalent complacency with indenture among the Methodists in Fiji and was thus a prime example of Christianity's influence on the end of indenture in Fiji.[234]

A Report on the Social and Moral Condition of Indians in Fiji

Andrews, the man who arguably did the most to end Indian indenture in Fiji, had this to say about Garnham's 1918 report;

> Miss Garnham . . . has fully borne out the main facts. Her Report, which has been published, is in some ways stronger than my own its statements concerning the hopelessly corrupt conditions of the Fiji coolie 'lines' and her recommendations for the improvement of the present situation are almost identical.[235]

Garnham's Report on the moral conditions of indentured women in Fiji was one of the more important reports after Andrews' seminal *Report on Indentured Labour in Fiji.* The mission was funded by the combined women's organizations in Australasia, which included organizations like the YWCA and the Feminist club, but mainly consisted of faith-based organizations like the Baptist Women's Missionary Auxiliary and the Church of England Mothers' Union.[236] Garnham's visit to Fiji garnered many of the same responses and suggestions as Andrews' report, but this time with a more favorable response from the Fiji government. This was because it managed to tackle the same

[234] There were some critics of indenture within the Fijian church besides Burton and these will be discussed in the chapter about the Fijian Methodist church. The majority of the church, however, was largely complacent or approving of indenture. Burton was notable among the few critics in that he was able to disproportionally effect the abolition of indenture by his critique.
[235] C. F. Andrews, *Fiji indentured labour,* Pamphlets, V144, Indian Office Records, The British Library, 30.
[236] Garnham, *A Report on the Social and Moral Condition of Indians in Fiji,* 3.

tough issues with a more conciliatory tone than Andrews. This report continued the tradition of outside Christian literature that illuminated the realities of indenture.

Background for *Report on the Social and Moral Conditions of Indians in Fiji*

The Indian Woman's Committee was founded in 1918 in order to fight for the rights of female laborers. This group found sympathy with the women's organizations in Australia and New Zealand, who formed formed the 'Australasian Committee of Inquiry into the Social and Moral Conditions of Indian Women in Fiji'. The committee was, as Margaret Mishra put it, created at the intersections of "colonialism, imperialism, Christianity and Indian nationalism" and fostered a sense of "universal sisterhood" among women of multiple countries.[237] As their first official action, they sent Florence Garnham, a representative from the London Missionary Society, to reevaluate the moral conditions of Fiji during the waiting period before indenture officially ended and see if any reforms had been made. The Christianity of the sending organiztions meant that the report would be firmly trenched in Christian morality.

Contents of the report

A Report on the Social and Moral Condition of Indians in Fiji (hereafter called *Moral Condition of Indians*) of 1918 did not concern itself with the economics and specifics of indenture, which Garnham said was adequately covered in McNiell and Lal's

[237] Margaret Mishra , "Between Women: Indenture, Morality and Health." *Australian Humanities Review,* Issue 52, (ANU E Press, 2012).

1914 report. It concerned itself more with the morals of the laborers.[238] She said this very clearly by writing the bold-faced statement, "Moral interests should precede commercial interests."[239] Out of all the colonies that used Indian indenture, Garnham claimed she went to Fiji because of the moral evils that took place and the high suicide rate among the laborers there.[240]

C. F. Andrews, she claimed, was the catalyst for much of this negative opinion in India. This seemed fitting given the similarities her report had with Andrews' own writings. Her report tackled the sanctity of marriage in Fiji, which both Andrews and Garnham claimed was being undermined by the gender gap in the Indo-Fijian communities, both indentured and free.[241] She argued that childhood was being destroyed by working in the lines.[242] She denounced the common practice of selling off young girls as brides and pointed out the need for women matrons in the Indian hospitals.[243] Lastly, she called for an injection of Indian leadership into the Fijian communities. Indenture was destroying the communal Indian life and leadership was needed to remedy the social chaos.[244] These points closely match those of C. F. Andrews, including women's rights, marriage sanctity and a Christian perspective on morality.

Garnham, more so than Andrews, focused on the assistance of Christian missions towards the education of Indians in Fiji. Regarding the mission schools, she said, "These missionaries are doing noble work, but their numbers are quite inadequate to meet the

[238] Garnham, *Moral Conditions of Indians,* 8.
[239] Ibid., 23.
[240] Ibid., 10.
[241] Ibid., 13.
[242] Ibid., 15.
[243] Ibid., 25.
[244] Ibid., 21.

need."[245] Garnham advocated schools catered to Indian languages and ideals, either through Indian teachers or European teachers trained in Indian customs. This, she argued, would help recreate the sense of community and morality that had been destroyed by indenture.[246]

Garnham ended the report with a series of recommendations.[247] First, She recommended the end of indenture as soon as possible. Additionally, she advocated action towards a normal sex ratio, called for married housing, required women hospital matrons, designed a new education scheme and instituted a new marriage ordinance. In short, she was advocating much of what Andrews had already called for.

The Christianity of *Moral Conditions of Indians*

The Christianity of Garnham's report was apparent from both its creation and its content. Garnham was a missionary from the London Missionary Society hired by a mainly Christian group of women. The effort meshed with the liberal Christian ideals of Andrews and Burton due to what the *Sydney Morning Herald* called the mission's "unostentatious and humanitarian efforts" to "improve the moral and social conditions of Indian women in Fiji."[248] The preoccupations of Garnham's report were decidedly Christian in scope; morality, sanctity of marriage, and community/moral leadership. Garnham also specifically made an effort to point out the assistance of the missionaries in education. All of these factors helped point to the inherent Christianity of this report.

[245] Garnham, *Moral Conditions of Indians,* 28.
[246] Ibid., 28.
[247] Garnham, *Moral Conditions of Indians,* 30. All recommendations are on this page.
[248] Mishra , "Between Women: Indenture, Morality and Health."

In short, it was inspired by Christian conviction and emphasized ideals of liberal Christian action and humanitarianism.

Responses to *Moral Conditions of Indians*

Though the Sydney Herald newspaper called this effort by women in Australasia "not widely known," Garnham's report did effect legislation. The report was sent to Sir Ernest Sweet-Escott, the governor, by the head of the Committee of inquiry. The governor, in response, created a committee to examine the report, calling it "temperate and reasonable" in light of Andrews' increasingly hostile literature of the time.[249] In official correspondence to governor Rodwell in mid 1919, it was said that "on the main, the recommendations . . . [were] being adopted."[250] A later newspaper report confirmed that, in particular, Garnham's recommendation for female hospital matrons was followed by the Fiji government because of her report.[251] Though Garnham's report was not the only catalyst for legislative change in Fiji near the end of indenture, it was a significant contributor.

Garnham's report contributed to the public opinion against indenture in India through newspaper reports. An opinion piece in *The Allahabad Leader* praised Garnham for being a European of the same mindset as the Indians, printing her recommendations as proof.[252] Future allusions to her work revolved around convincing

[249] Mishra , "Between Women: Indenture, Morality and Health." This is discussed in my chapter on C. F. Andrews.
[250] Gov. Rodwell to Viscount Milner, Sectary of State for the Colonies, 26, May 1919, "The Social and Moral Conditions of Indians in Fiji," CO 83/145-31577, Colonial Office Records, British National Archives.
[251] "OUR LONDON LETTER. India in Parliament," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), December 20, 1922, 10.
[252] "NOTES ON INDIANS ABROAD," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), April 27, 1919, 9.

the Indian populace from supporting assisted emigration to Fiji.[253] Her report was generally mentioned alongside Andrew's report and praised for being the humanitarian work of Christian European women.

Conclusions regarding Christian Literature

Much of the push towards the end of indenture has been ascribed to politicians and the desire to save face for modern India.[254] Indians and Hindus seemed to be the driving force behind this movement. Burton, Andrews, and Garnham however, emphasized the effect of Christianity on the end of indenture. These men and women, being outsiders to the Fijian political and religious system, were able to use their own spheres of influence to shed light on a system that regularly silenced those it oppressed. These people, convicted as they were by faith, possessed an almost outsider's perspective on Christianity. For a system of Christianity that, in Fiji, was not particularly interested in unbalancing the status quo, they emerged as renegades. The reports of these individuals, in particular, were widely propagated and influential to the Indian population's view of indenture. With regards to Burton and Andrews, perhaps it was their position on the fringes of mainline Christianity, coupled with their liberal ideals, that allowed them to go against the mainline beliefs regarding indenture. Nevertheless, it was their Christian convictions that led them to attack a system they saw as an exploitation of men and women with eternal souls. All three of these crusaders thus

[253] "EMIGRATION TO FIJI," *The Allahabad Leader* (Allahabad, India), March 29, 1920, 10.
[254] This will be discussed in my historiography chapter.

called for fellow Christians to take up "this holy sacrament of service in Fiji" and fight for an exploited people.[255]

[255] Burton, *The Fiji of To-day,* 364.

Chapter 3-

The Wesleyan Church and the Indo-Fijians

The Wesleyan Methodist church in Fiji was one of the most influential organizations in the Fiji archipelago. Wesley Methodism arrived in the 1830s from the nearby island of Tonga and spread quickly, with the large majority of Fijians eventually converting. The church, however, had a rocky history with the indentured and free Indians. Converting the Indian was a monumental task for the Methodist church in Fiji. Subsequently, the church did almost nothing to help end the system of indenture for them. The church was complacent with indenture because of the lack of success with Indian evangelism and, to a lesser extent, because of the monetary benefits given to them by the CSR. This lack of intervention by the church necessitated the assistance of Christian outsiders like J. W. Burton, C. F. Andrews and Florence Garnham to expose indenture and encourage political action.

The Success of the Methodist Church with the Fijians

A pamphlet handed out at the 100th anniversary of the Methodist church in Fiji spoke highly of their successes on the island chain. In contrast, they spoke passionately of the heathenism that existed before, saying; “It is only possible to hint at the true nature of the terrible darkness that enveloped the Fiji Islands before the arrival of the

Christian missionaries."[256] But, "into this dark land came the heralds of the new era, proclaiming 'the dayspring from on high; He who should give light to them that sit in darkness…"[257] The comparison of a change from 'darkness' to 'light' sounded like a hyperbole, but became more warranted with the knowledge that the Fijian populace was converted from heathenism to Christianity in just a few decades. In order to understand the church's relationship with the Indians, one must understand its relationship with the Fijian people.

The first attempt at evangelizing the Fijians was undertaken by John Williams of Tonga in 1830 and, while fervent, proved unsuccessful.[258] A large spiritual revival in the Tongan church led to the commission of two men to Fiji; William Cross and David Cargill in 1835.[259] The conversion point was, appropriately, the Tongan settlements on the Fiji Islands where war canoes were created and sold to Tongan chiefs. The missionaries stayed there with their families for about three unsuccessful years before reinforcements were sent and more significant conversions occurred.[260]

In 1836, a larger group was sent from England to 'convert the savages' in Fiji. About this time, Fijian chiefs began recognizing the prestige gained in the eyes of Europeans upon acceptance of the church. Subsequently, Fijian chiefs began inviting

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[256] *Fiji Methodist Centenary Souvenir; 1835-1935,* (Suva, Fiji: Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia, 1935), GENERAL REFERENCE COLLECTION X, 1021-1581, British Library, 7.
[257] Ibid.
[258] William Bennet, "Fiji" in *A Century in the Pacific; 1815-1915,* Ed. James Colwell, *A Century in the Pacific*, (London: C. H. Kelly, 1914), 446.
[259] Ibid., 447. The Tongan church at that time was already well established under the slightly theocratic rule of King George Tupou I, the Tongan Methodist Monarch. An excellent book describing the Tongan Methodist church is Sione Latukefu's *Church and State in Tonga,* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974). This book also describes the common occurrence of Methodist revivals in the Tongan church, where communities would recommit themselves to God in a spiritual fervor.
[260] Ibid., 448.

missionaries into their settlements.[261] As chiefs fell under the influence of the church and conversion numbers increased, famed Fijian missionary John Hunt began translating the Bible into Fijian, finishing the New Testament in 1847 just before his death.[262]

One of the biggest successes for the Methodist Church in Fiji was the conversion of Cakombau, the self-proclaimed 'King of Fiji,' 18 months after the death of his dreaded and obstinately pagan father Tanoa in 1852. This conversion paved the way for further ministry by influencing one of the most powerful Fijian chiefs. In the same year, missionary David Lyth began training native ministers, allowing the church to reach the Fijian people in a way that spoke to them.[263] Due to the combination of native converts coming from both high and low status, conversion numbers grew exponentially.

Another aspect of the church's reach was education. Two decades after the arrival of missionaries in the islands, a permanent concrete school was built in dedication to Thomas Baker, the first martyr in the Fiji interior. Schools for Fijian children popped up all over the islands in the coming decades. As the church grew, need for official biblical training grew. In response, an official ministry college was opened in 1908. [264]

In addition to the Methodist, there was a pronounced Anglican presence in the region through the London Missionary Society. A meeting between Anglicans and Methodists in 1880 discussed the conflicts between them. The general consensus was that "the Wesleyan Mission had done a Noble Work in Fiji and the object of the Church

[261] Bennet, "Fiji" in *A Century in the Pacific,* 454.
[262] Ibid., 457.
[263] Ibid., 463.
[264] Ibid., 467.

of England hereafter so far from desiring to obstruct or confuse that work, was rather to help it" by focusing on the unreached white settlers in Fiji.[265] Essentially, this meeting solidified an agreement that already stood in parts of the Pacific—the two denominations would not try to tread on each other's turf. The church of England agreed not to establish a church among the Fijians who had largely already been converted to Methodism. Though the Roman Catholic church would come, its impact would remain negligible in Fiji. The Methodists ministered to the Fijians while the Church of England "confined its work to Europeans, Melanesians and Indians."[266]

History of the Methodist Church and the Indo-Fijians

Though the first Indians arrived in Fiji in 1878, the first call for a native evangelist was made in 1884. The request was largely ignored by the church who at that time saw the influx of this new morality from the sub-continent a "terrible menace . . . to the well-being of [the] Church and people of Fiji."[267] The first actual attempt at evangelism came from John Williams, a missionary from India. He, however, returned to India in 1894, disheartened at his lack of success. This first attempt foreshadowed the church's later relationship with the Indo-Fijians. The Indian mission would be underfunded and poorly staffed for the next thirty years. This apathy would showcase

[265] W. N. Gunson, "A Missionary Comity Agreement of 1880," *The Journal of Pacific History,* Vol. 8, (Taylor and Francis, 1973), 191-195.
[266] *Fiji Methodist Centenary Souvenir,* 22. Despite promising to focus on the Indians, they were not very successful among this population.
[267] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 9.

the church's view towards the Indians and helped explain its aloofness towards the abolition of Indian indenture.

Finally, in 1897, the call was answered by a young, brave mission sister, Hannah Dudley, who was sent to minister to the thousands of Indians by herself. She was not well funded by the mission board, so she sought outside help. She was eventually supported by the New South Wales Ladies Auxiliary for the Methodist church, who promised to donate a penny a day per person to fund her cause.[268] Dudley singlehandedly established both a church and a school for the Indians. Though the converts were few, from this church came several prominent future Indian Methodist leaders. With few conversions, Hannah did gain much needed respect among the Indian populace and became known as 'Hamarii Maa," or "Honored Mother."[269]

After more calls for assistance, Cyril Bavin was sent in 1903 to train Indians to be leaders and clergymen in the church. The Australasian Methodist Mission Board thought that, like the Fijians, conversion would be assisted by the use of native evangelists. J. W. Burton, who arrived in 1902, also thought this a good idea.[270] Subsequently, six Indian catechists were brought to Fiji in 1906.[271] These men, however, quarreled among themselves and were quickly sent back. The two most vocal missionaries to the Indians, Burton and Bavin, possessed vastly different opinions regarding the indenture system. Burton's opinion was, as previously discussed, incredibly critical. Bavin, however, endorsed the indenture system and even, at one

[268] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 13.
[269] Ibid., 16.
[270] Ibid., 20.
[271] Ibid., 24.

point, desired to use mission funds to hire indentured laborers to build church property.[272] Richard Piper, another missionary, arrived in 1907. He would later be one of the few opponents to Indian indenture in the church, along with Burton and Dudley.[273]

While missionaries assigned to the Indians quarreled amongst themselves and struggled for funds, the Fiji Synod, which had at the turn of the century been placed under the jurisdiction of the Australasian Methodist Church, had different plans.[274] Rather than spend their money on ministering to the Indians in the Fiji islands, the synod surprisingly decided in 1906 to consider sending a mission to India.[275] The missionaries to the Indian section were furious that the synod was contemplating ignoring the Indians on their doorstep in favor of those far away. Though this event ended up not occurring, it reflected the popular sentiment among the Methodists that the Indians in Fiji were not worth spending money on. George Brown spoke for the Methodist Mission Board on April 22, 1902 with a statement that said spending large sums on the Indians was not worthwhile when the money could be more effectively used on the Fijians.[276]

It was only in 1906 that the separate "Indian Committee" was created in the synod. Most of the Indian missionaries, however, desired their own separate Indian Synod.[277] The idea for a separate synod was first openly discussed in 1909 due to the

[272] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 19.
[273] Ibid., 36.
[274] The Fiji synod was a yearly meeting of Methodist ministers in Fiji that made decisions for the district and appealed to the larger Australasia Methodist church for funds and staff.
[275] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 23.
[276] Ibid., 23.
[277] Ibid., 25.

vastly different needs of the Fiji mission and the Indian mission.[278] Arguments continued, however, for most of the following decade. Finally in 1920 after the abolition of Indian indenture, the Fiji Synod addressed the idea of an Indian Synod. But, their statement discussed the "inexpediency" of a separate synod and the Fiji Synod turned it down.[279] This separate synod would be created in later decades. By ignoring the vastly different needs of the Indian mission in refusing to create a separate synod, the Methodist church further displayed their apathy towards the Indians in Fiji.

In 1913, W. E. Bennett, of the Fijian Methodist staff, gave a report before the Methodist Mission board in Australia about the lack of progress in the Indian mission. As a result, they sent C. Cape, an experienced missionary in India, to come survey the mission and suggest improvements.[280] Cape had had success in India evangelizing to the low-caste Indians, who converted to Christianity in order to gain social prestige. The Indians in Fiji, however, had largely given up a rigid caste system and there was no lower class in which to focus evangelism efforts.

Cape supported the expansion of language training and discussed the need for more catechists, or ministers, from India. Catechists specifically from India, he argued, were needed because of their specialized knowledge of Indian culture.[281] This need for catechists was not new to the Indian mission, as it was present both before and after Cape's report. After a year, Cape's request was augmented by a claim that the Fijian native staff was not satisfactory.[282] The observation was that the catechists did not have

[278] *Fiji District Synod,* 1908, 60.
[279] Ibid., 1920, 539.
[280] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 25.
[281] *Fiji District Synod,* 1913, 230.
[282] Ibid., 1910, 106.

knowledge of either theology or Indian culture. This led to the Indian mission's request for a more strenuous yearly training in both Christian and Indian theology for all catechists in the mission.[283] This fervent call for knowledgeable assistance from Indian ministers, however, was ignored multiple times by the synod.[284] The Indian mission was thus inadequately staffed, and displayed a lack of care for the Indian people in Fiji due to the difficulty of evangelizing to the Indo-Fijians.

Though the Methodist church in Fiji was largely unsuccessful in their attempts at evangelizing the Indians, they were relatively successful in their attempts to educate them. Andrews, in his treatise against indenture, criticized the government of Fiji for not providing education to the indentured Indian children while simultaneously commending the work of the church in educating them.[285] Schools specifically designed for the indentured children on the plantations began appearing in 1898. The indentured laborers, understandably, were wary of proselytization for their children. This led to a rather small number of Indian children entering the available education system.[286] The education system increased in small increments until 1915, when the government required a donation of 500 pounds from the CSR for each school that catered to children under indenture.[287] The school system was largely set up in the hope of converting Indian children, but even this attempt at evangelization largely failed. The Fiji Synod displayed their frustration towards this failure and the Indian populace in general with

[283] *Fiji District Synod,* 1914, 278.
[284] Ibid., 1908-1914, 45, 49, 67, 105, 279.
[285] Andrews, *Indentured Labour in Fiji,* 45.
[286] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 43.
[287] Ibid., 45.

the statement that it was "due to the pernicious influence of their heathen home-life, militating against the work of [the Methodist] school-teachers."[288]

In addition to education, the Methodist church in Fiji provided a large number of social welfare programs to the Indians, including hospitals and orphanages. Hannah Dudley created the first orphanage when she came in the early 20th century, but this was replaced with a concrete structure in Dilkusha, Fiji in the 1910s. This would become the only orphanage for the Indians.[289] An influenza epidemic in 1918 would increase the usage of the orphanage and cause the government to give a 10 pound subsidy per orphan.[290] The orphanage was largely a humanitarian effort, rather than a proselytizing effort. Cyril Bavin made this clear in a statement in 1912.[291] The other humanitarian push from the church was the creation of hospitals. The Indians under indenture were provided with healthcare as per their contracts, but the free Indians were largely ignored. J. W. Burton began to persuade the 1908 synod to create a hospital.[292] Once completed at 100 beds, it was hardly enough for the 32,000 Indians on the island at the time.[293] An adequate number of hospitals was not created for several decades.

[288] *Fiji District Synod,* 1911, 142.
[289] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 57.
[290] Ibid., 58.
[291] Ibid., 56.
[292] *Fiji District Synod,* 1908, 22.
[293] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 58.

Opinions on the Abolition of Indenture in the Methodist Church in Fiji

The Mainline Church

While there were differing opinions about indenture in Fiji, it soon became clear that the mainline church was largely apathetic toward abolishing indenture. Most everyone in the mission, except the Indian Mission staff members Hannah Dudley, Richard Piper and J. W. Burton, advocated reform rather than abolition of indenture.[294] Burton actually demonstrated the typical mission opinion in a statement made before his many years in the Indian mission changed his opinion;

> The whole system of Indenture is under Government control, and every effort is made to eliminate anything like abuse. On the whole the Indians are well cared for and their life here must be very much more tolerable than what they have been accustomed to in their own country.[295]

Wood, in his history of the Indian ministry of the Methodist church in Fiji, discussed the commercial interests of the Methodist church in maintaining indenture. As an extreme example of this, he offered the example of Cyril Bavin, the senior missionary in the Indian Mission. Bavin, at one point, found it desirous to hire a group of indentured laborers to build a church complex, until Richard Piper shut down the idea.[296] In addition, Bavin complied with CSR managers by squashing sentiments for abolition in the church after receiving threats of reduced funding for the mission.[297]

Bavin, in 1915, wrote a section about Indo-Fijians in the Pacific Methodist church's centenary history *A Century in the Pacific.* His was a particularly glowing

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[294] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 39
[295] Chritine Weir, "An Accidental Biographer?" in *Pacific Lives,* 215.
[296] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 37.
[297] Ibid.

depiction of the indenture system that almost appeared to be a response to Burton's *Fiji of To-day*. Indenture, to Bavin, was absolutely necessary. "The native Fijian would not work," so Bavin found it beneficial that the "European planter turned his eyes to the seething millions of semi-starved India."[298] Though the conditions were not ideal for the Indians in Fiji, Bavin thought it "compar[ed] very favorably with the life of" those in India.[299] Indenture, he argued, increased the mental, physical and moral capacities of the immigrants.[300] Though he supported indenture, he gave ideas for reforms, including the encouragement of more women immigrants that were not "prostitutes." He also pointed out the ineffectiveness of capital punishment in response to marriage-based honor killings on the plantations. These killings, he argued, were "condoned by Indians," and hangings were ineffective at stopping them. [301] He spent the last part of his book calling for furthered evangelistic endeavors to the unreached Indo-Fijians. He never once condoned the abolition of indenture.

Bavin also felt threatened by the financial support of the CSR, causing him to advocate reform over abolition. When Richard Piper, missionary to the Indians in Lautoka, Fiji, published a 1914 letter in the *Calcutta Statesman* advocating for the abolition of indenture, Bavin wrote several passionate responses. A J Small, chairman of the Fiji district, also wrote a response reassuring readers that the church advocated reform over abolition.[302]

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[298] Cyril Bavin, "The Indian in Fiji" in A *Century in the Pacific*, 178.
[299] Ibid., 181.
[300] Ibid., 183.
[301] Ibid., 181. These killings occurred when women were unfaithful to their husbands. The husbands would often kill the wife and the man she cheated with.
[302] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 36.

Though financial concerns were a large part of the indifference towards abolition by the mainline Fijian Methodist church, the difficulty of Indian evangelization was one of the main causes. The arrival of the Indians in the Fiji Islands—rather than as an opportunity—was seen as a threat by a majority of the Methodist church. Even J. W. Burton, missionary to the Indians, was concerned. He summarized the opinion of most white Fijian ministers in this quote from his 1915 book *The Fiji of To-day*;

> Fiji may be heathen again within the century. To-day there are over 40,000 Indians settled in these islands. Cargoes of the frankest ' heathenism ' come every year, and thus the numbers grow by leaps and bounds. What does this mean to the Christian Church here ? It means that, unless tremendous and sustained effort is put forth, the sign of the Cross will be displaced by the Hindu Trident and Muhammadan Crescent. There is still need for the prayer of the dying saint, John Hunt : 'O let me pray once more for Fiji! Lord! for Christ's sake bless Fiji! Save Fiji ! Save Thy servants ! Save Thy people ! Save the heathen in Fiji !'[303]

While the simplistic animism of the Fijians was seen as easily convertible, the Indians were seen as "subtle, intellectual" Hindus and "haughty, aggressive" Muslims.[304] Sanadhya, the former indentured laborer whose account help spread awareness of the injustice of indenture, said to Burton during a religious conversation,

> Do you think that you will ever convert me? … I am of the sacred thread [that being the Brahmin or priestly caste]; my ancestors, long generations before you were born, worshipped after this way. They discovered the only way for my caste… There are thoughts [in the Vedas] that you English, clever as you are in science and machines, can never understand . . . The chances of your becoming a Hindu are much greater than those of my becoming a Christian.[305]

[303] Burton, *The Fiji of Today,* 8.
[304] Ibid.
[305] Sanadhya, *My Twenty-One Years,* 3.

This sentiment applied to much of the Hindu Indian population, which believed that Hinduism proceeded Christianity and therefore was superior.[306] The Methodist Ministers in Fiji believed that the Christian idea of the brotherhood of man did not resonate with Hindus who disdained lower castes.[307] Cyril Bavin, in his official account of the Methodist ministry to the Indo-Fijians said that, "It [was] positively impious in [a Hindu's] eyes to assert that all men are fellow creatures; it is an offence against God for a Hindu to love his enemy or even to love an enemy as oneself."[308]

In addition to the religious differences, there was a significant anti-English sentiment among Indians in both Fiji and India around the turn of the century due to the home rule movement.[309] Burton said of the Indian; "The Indian- He is of our Empire—if that is any sort of comfort to us. He salutes the same flag—and spits venomously on the ground the moment our back is turned."[310] This anti-British sentiment among the Indians made the white man's religion all the more unattractive. The Indian was difficult to convert and this led to a lack of effort among the members of the Methodist church in Fiji. This lack of effort can be seen in the history of the relations between the Methodist church and the Indo-Fijians.

The pamphlet written during the 100th anniversary of the Methodist church had much to say about the successes of the church with the Fijians, but also included a small section about the mission to the Indians.[311] It seemed that, even in 1935—when

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[306] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 27.
[307] Ibid., 29.
[308] Cyril Bavin, "The Indian in Fiji" in *A Century in the Pacific,* 190.
[309] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 31. The home rule movement was the push by Indian nationalists to make India a state independent from British rule.
[310] Burton, *The Fiji of To-day,* 265.
[311] This pamphlet was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter.

indenture had long since ended—the church still had trouble with the Indo-Fijians. The writer of the pamphlet, however, was hopeful.

> The Indians in Fiji present the Christian Church with an opportunity of service as great as the one that opened up before the Fijian missionaries of the last century. 'Fiji for Christ' was their watchword. In facing the new century, attention should be directed to the 83,289 Indians, many of whom have been born in Fiji, for the field is already white unto harvest.[312]

This pamphlet's comparison of the Indians to the Fijians demonstrates a common theme in the Methodist church. This was because the church tended to dweel upon its success with its Fijian congregation. That being said, the Fijians and Indians required vastly different evangelistic strategies and had different spiritual needs.[313] While there was one synod for both the small Indian church and the vastly larger Fijian church, Indian Christians and missionaries had trouble receiving both funds and attention. J. W. Burton later said of the Indian section of the church that it had been "the most costly of all the Church's enterprises and for a time appeared to be the least successful."[314]

The Fijian Christians themselves criticized the heavy expenditure on the Indians—schools, orphanages and hospitals—while garnering little progress.[315] Even as early as 1902, George Brown, a pioneering Pacific missionary, wrote to A J Small that he was concerned that the "Fiji work may suffer if such large sums have to be diverted from what is at all events much less profitable work than our Fijian."[316] In part because of this

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[312] *Fiji Methodist Centenary Souvenir; 1835-1935,* 47-48.
[313] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 63.
[314] Ibid., 65.
[315] Ibid., 63.
[316] Ibid., 24.

economic frustration, the Indian Mission was chronically understaffed with missionaries. The Indian Mission asked in 1911 for additional missionaries from India to "take up the work of evangelizing the 46,000 Indian now settled in these islands."[317] Most of the missionaries who responded came undertrained. The synod in 1914 asked that missionaries be specially trained in India due to the large language and culture barriers.[318] This did not occur and demonstrated yet another sign of apathy towards the Indian population by the Mission Board. This apathy would further contribute to the church's lack of involvement in the abolition of indenture.

In conclusion, the Indians on Fiji were seen as a threat to the mission who had been criticized, and largely ignored by a church that had had incredible success with the Fijians. The Indian conversions were few in comparison to the investment of resources. These factors led to a general apathy regarding the indenture of Indians. There was an obvious monetary bias towards this apathy, as the resolutely pro-indenture CSR was providing funds for the schools that comprised much of the Indian section of the Methodist mission. The church took a safe position in advocating reforms within the system rather than its abolition and, even in some cases like that of Cyril Bavin, actively endorsed it. These factors led to the church's apathy regarding what was widely seen as an exploitative and evil system, even while it was right at their doorstep.

The Dissidents

Of the many ministers and missionaries in the Methodist church in Fiji, there were only a few that spoke out vocally against indenture—Dudley, Piper and Burton.

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[317] *Fiji District Synod,* 1911, 141.
[318] Ibid., 1914, 274.

While had various reasons to do so, the common grown between them all was their ministry to the Indians. There was a very small number of Indian missionaries in the early years of the effort. All three of these individuals were often ignored by the Methodist church in Fiji and achieved frustratingly low numbers of conversions. In ministering to the Indians, they were already marginalized as ministers. Their views regarding indenture, in fact, exacerbated their marginalization.

Hannah Dudley, the first minister to the Indians, was quoted in Sanadhya's indenture autobiography as an 'unbiased observer.'[319] In the text, which was originally a quote from a letter to a newspaper, she spoke of the abuses against Indian orphans and women, specifically against the monetary mindset of the those that advocated for indenture.

> And for what is all this suffering and wrong against humanity? To gain profits – pounds, shillings, and pence for sugar companies and planters and others interested. I beseech of you not to be satisfied with any of the reforms to the system of indentured labour. I beg of you not to cease to use your influence against this iniquitous system till it be utterly abolished.[320]

Dudley had worked with the Indian poor and orphaned for years and knew first-hand the difficulties that indenture brought. She worked tirelessly, though she was largely ignored and underfunded by the mainline Methodist church.

Richard Piper, who had been a missionary for decades to the Indians in Fiji, made a bold public proclamation against the indenture system in India through in letter disseminated across newspapers in India. On the credentials of "six years' close

[319] Sanadhya, *My Twenty-One Years,* 81.
[320] Ibid., 81.

acquaintance with the working of the immigration system as it obtain[ed] in Fiji," Piper declared that the indenture system needed to be "radically altered or entirely abolished."[321] He focused on issues that would be expounded upon by later abolition crusaders such as misrepresentation in recruiting, crime, and the dissolution of marriage. Piper's criticisms carried markedly Methodist influences like concerns about morality and the lack of education among the indentured laborers. Piper made a rather prophetic statement when he said, "only pressure from outside the colony [would] effect any adequate degree of reform in the matter of school and hospital accommodation, social and indentured labour conditions."[322] This letter was one of the first major public statements made against indenture in Fiji besides Burton's. The fact that he made the statement without the consultation of the mission would eventually lead to more conflict.

While Burton's motivations were discussed previously, it is important here to again emphasize his motivations for speaking out against indenture. Burton was, in many ways, a theological liberal. He advocated a social gospel that focused on the physical needs rather than the spiritual needs of the people. Many of his views opposed the mainline Methodism of the time.[323] Burton saw the Indians as someone to serve, not just as people to be converted. He also thought that Christians had a duty to become involved in politics.[324] This would gain him opposition of both the Methodist church and politicians in Fiji.

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[321] Richard Piper, "INDIAN INDENTURED LABOURERS; How They Fare in Fiji," *The Allahabad Leader,* January, 24, 1914, 8.
[322] Richard Piper, "INDIAN INDENTURED LABOURERS; How They Fare in Fiji."
[323] Weir, "An Accidental Biographer?" in *Pacific Lives*, 221.
[324] Ibid., 224.

The Church's Response

The church's basic response to these three dissenters was to reinforce church's position on indenture. For example, the church's response to Burton's views of the indenture system was demonstrated in A J Small's retraction of his endorsement of Burton's book *The Fiji of To-day*. The Fiji Synod also sent a resolution to Francis May, the governor of Fiji at the time, saying that the book was written without the synod's consent.[325] This response showed that the government had great influence over the actions of the Methodist church. Thus, the church grew anxious over the risk of angering the fiercely pro-indenture Fijian government.

This trend to minimize political conflict regarding the system of indenture escalated due to the heated attack on indenture by Richard Piper in 1914. Cyril Bavin promptly wrote a response in *The Calcutta Statesman* advocating for indenture. A J Small, the chairman of the Fiji district in the Methodist church, took a mediating position and called for reforms, but not for abolition.[326] The church slowly became concerned with the consequences of advocating abolition, namely the revocation of funds by the CSR and the government, and were quick to respond.

This trend was also demonstrated in the church's response to C. F. Andrews, despite his crusade against indenture being a spiritual one. When he published his seminal 1916 report on indenture, the missionaries in the Indian work met together and agreed that, though he was correct on many accounts, Andrews grossly exaggerated many things.[327] Andrews responded to the Methodist Mission Board in Australia by

[325] *Fiji District Synod,* 1911, 145.
[326] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 36.
[327] Ibid., 40.

addressing their lack of concern over the sexual sins that were occurring in the colony. Andrews compared them to the Laodicean church mentioned in the book of Revelation, a church condemned for their wealth and apathy.[328] It was only in 1918, after full assurance that indenture was ending, that the Mission Board thanked Andrews for facilitating the end of indenture and hinted at an attempt to approach the government and secure further reform.[329]

Conclusions regarding the Wesley Church and Indo-Fijians

The Indians in Fiji were a major concern for the Methodist church. The Fijians had converted after only a few decades and with little opposition. The Indians, however, proved difficult to convert. They possessed a deep historically rooted sense of spirituality and a religion that claimed superiority over Christianity. Some missionaries, rather than seeing them as a difficult people to reach, saw them as a moral threat to the strongholds they had among the Fijian people. There were some humanitarian efforts on the part of the Methodist church, but they were far too small for the tens of thousands of Indians that ended up calling Fiji home. This apathy towards the Indians accounted for what many considered the 'evils' of indenture. The Methodist church remained silent about the system partly because of monetary incentives from the CSR to remain complacent, but mostly from the long history of frustration and apathy towards the Indian people in Fiji.

[328] Wood, *Overseas Missions,* 41.
[329] Ibid.

Richard Piper claimed almost prophetically that abolition would take an *outside force* from the mainline Methodist church. Missionaries to the Indians, few in number, underserviced and unappreciated, made up the only opposing voices to the system. Change would end up coming from the outside. The call of God to serve the downtrodden would be answered by various different servants.

Conclusions

> In the future, every act of the colonies, which employ Indian labour, will be scrutinized with eyes that nothing will escape. We are certain that the public conscience will never rest content til it has swept away the last of the abuses, which have flourished like rank weeds wherever indentured labour has gone. We have now witnessed with our own eyes, in two different parts of the world, what this awakened public conscience can accomplish. We base on this, therefore, more than on any other single cause, our strongest hopes for the future.[330]

These were the closing lines of C. F. Andrews' seminal report on the abuses of Indian indentured labor in Fiji. Andrews' hope in writing the report was to stir up the minds and actions of the Indian populace by exposing the truth about the indenture system. The populace, of course, did become stirred up. The abolition of Indian indenture, as scholars have argued, was a major popular movement against British policy involving "almost every group in India."[331] Major Indian national figures like Gokhale, Gandhi and Hardinge became involved in the abolition of indenture. More than this, a significant contribution to this abolition was the exposé work done by writers of the time. Burton, Andrews, Piper, Garnham—these people and others exposed

[330] Andrews, *Report on Indentured Labour,* 65.
[331] Ray, "The Abolition of Indentured Emigration and the Politics of Indian Nationalism, 1894-1917," Abstract.

what had been hidden and even accepted for decades, namely the exploitation and moral degradation of tens of thousands of Indians in a far-off land.

What was significant about these reports, and reporters, were the Christian influences and motivations. These men and women were largely missionaries, ministers and clergymen. They sought to free the oppressed laborers in the name of God and because they regarded the dignity of all human beings, regardless of race, caste or country of origin. There were reports written besides these Christian reports, but, other than the autobiography of Totaram Sanadhya, they focused on the economics of the system. The reports of the Christians were filled with tales of religious and moral degradation. They exposed the child marriages, prostitution, marital strife, crime and indignity that these Indians were subjected to. These Christians, more than any of the other writers on indenture, riled up opposition and indignation among the Indian populace by focusing on the sufferings of these people. In so doing, they painted a picture of the indentured laborers as they were, people in pain and suffering, and not as merely faceless gears in the economic system.

The actions of these men and women contrasted with the Methodist Church in Fiji. This body, called to serve the poor and oppressed by the God they followed, nevertheless remained complacent with a system that was widely seen as oppressive. This was in spite of the fact that the oppression was right at their doorstep. They remained content with their Fijian congregation and only ventured out to create a few schools and hospitals for the Indo-Fijians. 'Reform,' though poorly pursued, was the ideal called for by the church—never 'abolition.' This was a distinction that the church was quick to assert. Thus, the church worked hard to stay in the good graces of the

Fijian government and the powerful Colonial Sugar Refining Company. This was coupled with apathy and frustration regarding the lack of evangelistic success amongst the Indo-Fijian population.

Importance

The church's apathy towards indenture played an important role in the later history of Fiji.[332] As the century continued, the Indian populace integrated more with the Fijians and participation in the political scene increased. They began demanding more rights. The Fijians, who had until the twentieth century remained the racial majority on the islands, found themselves at odds with a larger people group who shared different ideals, desires and, religious values. In the middle of the century the island of Fiji became known as the "three-legged stool," with the three racial groups (European, Fijian and Indian) comprising the legs.[333] Suffrage would be gradually extended and the Indo-Fijians would gain political and personal rights. Resentment between the groups would continue.

The church, as it so happened, would remain a largely Fijian-dominated institution. Indo-Fijians would remain Hindu and Muslim. Thus, religion became coupled with race on the island of Fiji. The Methodist church would remain critical of Hinduism and wary of Indo-Fijians. The Methodist church also supported the racially biased coups of the later twentieth century after the wobbly three-legged government,

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[332] An excellent history of the subsequent racial and political strife in Fiji is the previously mentioned *Broken Waves: A History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century* by Brij Lal.
[333] Lal, *Broken Waves,* Preface.

left behind by the British in the 70s, collapsed. [334] Religion would become racial in post-indenture Fiji and even into post-colonial Fiji. Contrasting the early interactions of the church with the indentured Indians (namely apathy and frustration) helps paint a clearer picture of the church's interactions with the Indians of Fiji's future history.

Though the church in Fiji would do little to end the system of indenture, it is unfair to say that the church in general failed. As this thesis has shown, the church was integral to exposing the moral degradation and exploitation of the indenture system in Fiji. Christians from outside the island looked at Fiji, saw the oppression and sought to give a voice to the voiceless. Specifically, J. W Burton, C. F. Andrews, Florence Garnham were three of the main advocates. They saw these people, not as threats or projects, but as people to be served. The church thus was faithful to observe "this holy sacrament of service in … Fiji."[335]

[334] Malcom Brown, "Tribal Chiefs Critical of Coup," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* December 7, 2006.
[335] Burton, *The Fiji of To-day*, 364.

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James Smith was born in New Albany, Indiana on August 24, 1994. He moved to Texas in middle school and discovered his love for history in high school. He began his college career in Fall 2103 at the University of Texas at Austin because of their excellent history department. Through college, James grew in many areas. He grew in his love of history and desire to teach. He grew in his musical abilities by playing banjo in several bluegrass bands, starting the UT Burnt Orange Bluegrass club and eventually writing his own music. Most importantly, and by the grace of God, he grew in his faith by joining the Austin Stone Community Church and leading several bible studies. His thesis grew out of his fascination with obscure history and specifically the Pacific—a third of the world that he thought was significantly overlooked. He would go on to finish his history degree and his Plan II honors degree on May 20, 2017. Next semester, James plans to finish his UTeach certification by student teaching in Round Rock ISD and then become a grade school history teacher in the DFW metroplex. Eventually, James desires to enter ministry and move to the northwest United States. Wherever he ends up, James hopes to honor God through his actions because of the salvation that has been bestowed upon him by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.